

OBJECTS OF TRANSCENDENCE

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A photograph of a tree at night, silhouetted against a bright, glowing light source, possibly a full moon or a street lamp. The light creates a strong backlight effect, illuminating the branches and leaves. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and purples, with the bright light source providing a stark contrast.

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INTRODUCTION

Objects of Transcendence

The title of this report, *Objects of Transcendence* describes the tangible objects and their core proposition: to create transcendent art-works that render concrete facts sublime.

The report records the journey from the first year proposal, which cites the Rothko exhibition at Tate Modern as a significant influence, its criterion a point of reference and measure for the creative performance in the subsequent years of study. The text refers to the profound meditative experience and considered the question, *how does an epiphany take place in and through a work of art?* A discursive discussion reflected on the comparative nature of an epiphany expressed in the art of Rothko, Serra and the Islamic scholar W.Chittick. The comparison called for a cross-cultural reading establishing a common ground in the Sublime Tradition.

My initial response to the Rothko's paintings and the subsequent research led me to identify contemplation as a central concern and acknowledged my experience within the mystical tradition of Sufism. As a consequence, the research developed further towards a transcendent discourse informed by an extensive reading list: The Quran and Islamic philosophy; Suhrwardi; a survey of sublime theories from Longinus to Žižek; to a wide range of artists from William Turner to Joseph Beuys and Bill Viola.

The research identified the 'Sublime' as a tradition I was intrinsically drawn towards and focused on the critique in Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of the Sublime and Beautiful*. The significance of the concept was further supported by a range of readings that include, Kant, Wordsworth and the documentary prose of W.S. Sebald and P.Schrader's account of the transcendent in film. Burke's psychological enquiry traces the source of the sublime to experiences that excite and cause one to tremble with pleasure, combining fear with delight. He moves the Sublime encounter away from the object (nature) and towards the conception of the beholder. My own enquiry centres on his theory of aesthetic opposition, in which

beauty is derived from pleasure and sublimity from pain. The paradox articulates my own perspective and forms the foundation of my creative discourse, which travels a precarious route until it finds a resolution in the fourth year.

The yearly reports reveal the constant search for a methodology that can critically answer the question *what does a transcendent object look like?* My diverse studio experiments focussed both on developing themes such as violence and transgression and their modes of display. The results are presented in a number of key case studies, which examine the art works as they establish a multi-disciplined practice and stimulate the narrative utilising a range of display platforms.

The pursuit of an appropriate sublime theme is evidenced throughout the dialogue examining the moral narratives of medieval paintings and supported by artists' work such as Thomas Demand and Bill Viola. Their influence allowed me to make a comparison between the imminence of the documentary with the transcendent archetypes of Violas videos, which serve to explore the lexicon of the human condition in the place of embodied experience. Viola states, '...a desire to create a space, an absolutely real, objective representation of the place where death is—to make a work not about death but a place beyond death' (Morgan, 2004, p.94).

In the latter reports, what becomes apparent is my interest in the paradoxical decision to initiate transcendence in trauma and a resolution is sought in the themes of terror perpetrated by or against the Muslim community. The terror addressed my own cultural perspective as a Muslim and acknowledges the necessity to foster an effective spirituality that activates compassion, in order to redeem traumatic events in history. My spirituality recognises Islamic political events as subjects and attempts to employ beauty as a force for change in the continuum of the present. Burke's theory of aesthetic opposition is diametrically opposed to this paradox; beauty acquires an antithetical position in which it attempts to liberate pain from terror, beauty necessitates order, which according to Burke, domesticates sublimity' (Burke, 1987, p.110). The report describes the endeavour to invoke catharsis in the audience by detaching the passions from the viewer and simulating a conscious wisdom that restores empathy and redeems a moral fortitude through self-awareness.

The conclusion of this report identifies these characteristics as transcendent, the poetics of dissonance is the centre of the work and its aspiration: to create transcendent works of art that galvanise the experience of the sublime as a force for change.

I reflect on the five years of professional practice and identify key developments within exhibitions, curatorial projects, teaching and Sufism. The experience of study significantly transformed my personal methods of teaching and learning. It chronicles the teaching initiatives with descriptive examples of workshops and demonstrates the learning outcomes. The success of the early studio workshops opens up opportunities for further teaching within the university (UEL) and recognises the expansion of teaching knowledge due to the employment in the Design Department.

The report acknowledges the transference of skills enabling the restructuring of pedagogy within the Sufi order (SST). This is exemplified by the formation of a new methodology for teaching initiatives for students and teachers, entitled *Preliminary Lessons*. The initiatives result in a new management structure that creates greater stability within the institution.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

I was born in 1963 in Sutton Coldfield, a district on the edge of Birmingham. My mother and father Ann and Jack Doherty were Irish Catholic immigrants, who emigrated from Dublin in 1956. At the age of ten, my parents divorced and I was brought up in the custody of my father, an unusual occurrence at that time. Although we faced many difficulties my childhood was very happy and the enduring memory of my mother was one of great aesthetic sensibility and a home conditioned by her absence.

My father was resolute in maintaining our cultural heritage and I received a Catholic education administered by nuns and priests. When I look back to the ordered but eccentric environment of the school, I acknowledge the profound effect on me of silence experienced in churches. This informed and encouraged all future reflective experiences found in prayer, meditation and an art practice.

As a child I found refuge in painting and received praise and attention for the outcome. My father nurtured my talent, and encouraged the ambition of becoming an artist and I worked studiously towards the goal of reaching Art school. In my mind Art school was a sanctuary irrespective of class or ethnicity. It was a safe environment to experiment with life, a laboratory in which anything was possible and the impossible was given serious consideration.

In 1981, I studied BA Fine Art at Hull College of Art and progressed to the MA programme at Manchester Polytechnic in 1985. Both provincial art schools had a reputation as dedicated bastions to late modernist abstraction. In Hull, the regular visiting lecturers were highly influential and emphasised colour and the plastic nature of painting. Both schools endorsed the infectious style of lyrical abstraction that was an open approach to a formalist art practice and best exemplified by Harold Rosenberg's statement on American action painters, 'the canvas was the arena in which to act' (Artnews, 2007).

I enthusiastically worked this tradition, making paintings on the floor and experimenting with different methods of production. The images were evocative of atmospheric landscape and acknowledged the British landscape tradition of Turner and Constable.

On the M.A. programme the paintings continued to be refined within the same tradition, but gained a psychological charge due to their burgeoning narrative content. My significant memory of the programme and its continual influence was the enjoyment of a community occupied in heated debates about the essence of abstraction, which fostered strong dialectic positions.

I completely engaged in the art school experience and immersed myself in all its opportunities. I managed a nightclub and hired cinemas and warehouses to stage concerts and curate exhibitions. The entrepreneurial skills gained during my time at art school continue to be expressed in my professional practice and have been invaluable in establishing a Sufi Order in the UK.

After completing my education aged twenty-two, I arrived in London, established a studio and began working for Howard Hodgkin and later Anthony Caro. Working in their studios was an insightful apprenticeship into the internal workings of the commercial art world. The curatorial knowledge acquired from co-coordinating and installing exhibitions was to shape future employment and extend the possibilities of my own professional practice.

This period was a time of turmoil and great uncertainty. I began to question earlier influences and was dissatisfied and even disillusioned with British abstraction. I came to consider it vague and unclear causing problems with form and therefore content. I began to look for strategies to make an art driven towards meaning and looked within myself for inspiration and started exploring Sufism and subsequently Islam.

This proved to be a moment of epiphany which awakened my curiosity to the internal dialogue around the question: "*How do I exist and why?*" I gave up the excessive 'party lifestyle' and joined a contemplative Sufi Order. My Shaykh once said to me, "Sobriety is the most powerful form of consciousness". How ironic it is that a drunken man joined a sober Order.

The vitality of Islam and the confirmation of proof found within a living religion is its ability to produce ‘realised people,’ saints who have the capacity to guide others. Their presence is the literal truth of the religion. Within the Islamic world, it is still possible to find many such human beings. As Muslims we believe it is our destiny to be found by such teachers rather than for us to choose them. I was fortunate to meet Hazrat Azad Rasool- Grand Shaykh of the Naqshbandi Order, whom I developed a close relationship with, undergoing a training of disciplined transformation. For the next 20 years, I continued to visit Delhi on annual retreats, co-coordinating the Sheikh’s visits to London and managing weekly Sufi gatherings.

The study of Sufism leads the seeker to inner knowledge through a series of transformative experiences. With specific techniques, the student receives blessing and transmissions from God and gradually the qualities of the individual become refined. Self-centred perspectives give way to deep insights into the nature and meaning of life, and one’s outer work and inner state become relative to each other, the Quran states:

‘We shall show them the signs upon the horizons and within until it becomes clear that he is the real’ (Qur’an 40:45).

It became apparent there were two powerful forces operating in my life, which formed a strained but creative dialogue. The recognition of this dynamic centred on the role of the self as the medium through which both arts and spiritual practice are realised. The artist’s ego is often encouraged to assert itself; in contrast in a spiritual practice, the ego is harnessed. I often felt these two diverse approaches were in conflict, and I sought to find a vehicle for their resolution.

Although I was going through great difficulties in the studio, in my personal life I was experiencing happiness and fulfilment. In 1991 I married Saada Abdullahi Abubeker, an Ethiopian from a renowned ancient Islamic city of Harrar. Our lives together were to become a journey, crossing over many cultural bridges in our personal relationship and as representatives of an Islamic Institution in London. Our partnership opened up many unforeseen opportunities and challenges. After our marriage, we were invited to live in a Sufi Zawia (monastery) in the Blue Ridge mountains of Virginia, U.S.A. The Shaykh of the Zawia was renowned for his work in

cross-cultural education and ran various successful programmes. After receiving a period of training I was invited to teach art and conflict resolution to international students aged 16 -25. Unfortunately due to a life-threatening accident my wife and I were forced to return to London.

I continued to work in a sustained way in the studio, but the paradoxes driving the development of the practice were evident. Islam encouraged a search for meaning in life and work; and yet I created a body of figurative paintings in opposition to the most common and accepted expression within Islamic art, the language of abstraction. I simply trusted my intuition and accepted the paradox. I continued a search for a language and a conceptual framework that could relate to both my Islamic belief and a Western life style. This resulted in an extensive series of figurative paintings entitled *Future Perfect*.



Garry Doherty *Future Perfect* 12:15 graphite/paper 2.5mx1.8m

Ten years ago I began collecting photographic material from Sunday supplements, c.1968s to the beginning of the 1980s. I became interested in representations of 1970s interiors that portrayed a conceptual progression towards a futuristic future. The modernist vision was that man, by means of science and technology, could conquer nature and create his own ideal living conditions. This idea was the catalyst that

articulated many of the designs and advertisements of the period and was sold back to the public as our future.

I began to experiment making collages from these appropriated interiors with a view to producing large format paintings. From these experiments, I found a way of working, concentrated on the style and subject of one year -1976. Locating the subject in one year gave the project a deliberate focus and a strong strategic position. To look back at a projected future in order to gain insight into the present is a strategy, which informed the conceptual framework of the project entitled *Future Perfect*.



Garry Doherty *Future Perfect* 12:00 oil/canvas 3mx2.5m

Returning to this projected future, in a historical time frame that no longer exists opened a new space, allowed me permission to play in the ruins of modernism, appropriating its redundant language in an attempt to give a new vision and understanding to our own historical moment.

The resulting works were paintings inspired by photographs depicting one year--1976 was a liminal moment in the history of science and technological development which was to change social and cultural thinking, a moment of transition from modernist utopian notions of progressive ideals, to the awakening of the post-modernist, pluralist, and materialist society evidenced by contemporary culture.

The paintings record the slippage that occurs when two moments of time collide in anachronistic constructs, which congeal and confuse our understanding of time and place while convincing us of their believability and historic accuracy.

These paintings depict a filmic futuristic vision of a cosmopolitan Britain, infused with aspirational designs of the 1970s, capturing its appearance just before its inevitable collapse. The paintings appear to have been freeze-framed before or after the actual event. The spectator is confronted by a static image of historical resonance, conflating past, present and future. My intention was for this historical moment to disintegrate and the uncanny to be awakened, opening the psychic boundaries and reviving what has been repressed or forgotten. The future is found foreshadowed in the past. The strange and its uncanny resemblance to the real is where I located my practice.



Garry Doherty *Future Perfect 12:11* Oil/Aluminium 2.5mx1.65m



Future Perfect 12:12 Oil/wood 20cmx40cm

In retrospect, by reviewing the motivations of the project within the perspective of the Doctorate report, I realised it documented my personal history and a recollection of my formative years. The memories embedded in these images are a conflation of the aesthetic aspiration, expressed in a design-conscious environment and a cross-cultural experience. This dialogue was my future perfect.

THEORY AND CREATIVE PRACTICE

“What ever spiritual light you have achieved through meditation practices will be transmitted in the artwork...so just be!”

Shaykh Hazrat Azad Rasool

The Doctorate research has been instrumental in reforming the conditions of my practice. It was through my Shaykh's¹ directive and encouragement that I enrolled on the Professional Doctorate Programme, and the movement has been towards a critical engagement that complements and empowers my spiritual life.

The quote above advocates *to just be*, a statement endorsed shortly before the Shaykh's death. It affirms 'permission' as a significant agent, the vehicle needed to mobilize change for a moral good. During the period of study, I struggled to recognise the efficacy of the statement, confused by its simplicity; the journey to acceptance is the narrative of my doctorate.

An Epiphany in a Work of Art: Mark Rothko at the Tate Modern

The first year Proposal recognized a need to realign my project, *Future Perfect*. The core objective had been to develop an art that references the world, while creating the possibility for a sacred experience, and the secular nature of the painting's retro imagery obscured that objective.

I had no idea how to proceed until I attended the Mark Rothko exhibition at Tate Modern in November 2008. The exhibition catalogues works from the *Seagram Murals* (1958-59), to the late dark paintings, culminating in the black paintings of the Houston Chapel (1971).

While viewing the black paintings I was impressed by their ability to hold my gaze in an extended period of contemplation; they engendered a state of grave and unparalleled calm. I came away profoundly affected and inspired. The experience of viewing was for me, I realised, an epiphany.

¹ Shaykh refers to a spiritual teacher or master.

Rothko created what could be termed a ‘theatre of reverence’ (O’Doherty, 1988, p.164) – a space where viewing becomes a devotional act, an ideally singular and uninterrupted intimate experience. He stated, ‘The reason I paint them...is precisely because I want to be very intimate and human’ (Ross, 1990, p.172).

Applying knowledge from Sufi practices, I consciously internalized the experience of epiphany. In order to understand ‘*the how of its engagement*’ I recalled Rothko’s paintings, their framing device of the painted rectangle functioning as a window to hold the gaze. Its contrivance separated the viewer from the void, allowing the viewer to absorb and consider the immensity of the abyss, from a position of relative safety.

On continuing to gaze upon the work, one became aware that the space of the painting was a place of questioning – a mental space. As the experience unfolded a state of solemnity was induced, the painted frame receded and a deep identification between the void and self took place - as if in union.

Rothko arguably achieves a rare event in the history of painting – one in which the viewer is assimilated into the work. I experienced this coming together of self and work as I stood looking at No.6. and speculated; “it is as if it were the last exhaled breath of a dying man , resigned to his fate and fully accepting of his destiny.”

In the last years of Rothko’s life he suffered from a series of depressive episodes, which lead him to take his own life (1971), six years after completing this painting. The words of the theologian John Millbank best express my sentiments and experience of the painting: ‘the absolutely unknowable void, upon whose brink we finite beings must dizzily hover’ (Shaw, 2006, p.2).



Mark Rothko No 6. 1966



Richard Serra, *TT1 London (x 2)* Gagosian Gallery, 2008

Richard Serra: Gagosian Gallery

To test the experience of epiphany at the Tate, I decided to compare Rothko's work with another influential abstract artist, Richard Serra, who also had an exhibition in London at the time of writing.

I visited the Gagosian Gallery in December 2008 and saw Richard Serra's exhibition, *Open Field*. In the gallery Serra had placed four large-scale steel sculptures – including a labyrinthine dark steel sculpture entitled *Open Ended*. The work invites the viewer into its interior by way of a curving and vertiginous crevasse. It directs the viewer/participant through a carefully constructed corralling action. The thick cool dark surfaces (cor-ten steel) curve upwards well beyond the height of the viewer, concealing most of the gallery and its illuminated ceiling from view. The darkness both envelops and propels the viewer forward through the work. One is made to confront the unremitting power and immensity of form, and one's own fragility in the face of it.

This construction is not nature, not architecture but sculpture – which works through an association with both nature and architecture. This sculptural experience evokes Turner's *Deluge*, a painting that represents the impending arrival of a great storm, in which nature's dark immensity threatens to overwhelm the diminutive figures inhabiting the picture plane.

Serra's work is similarly awesome and physically intimidating. The sheer scale and material 'truth' of the works seem to represent as nature does, the *majesty* and *purity* of creation – and like nature, the work rehearses these qualities through an explicit and spatially articulated separation between work and viewer. The awesome and sometimes threatening presence of the work is, as in Edmund Burke's account, always *physically embodied*, rather than transcendent. Unlike nature, the apprehension of these attributes creates a grounded and thoroughly material experience that disallows proximity and intimacy or indeed, a release from self-consciousness in relation to the other.

In interviews Serra stresses: 'the essence of material...as a phenomenological experience of weight, gravity, space, stasis and time' (Gagosian Gallery 2008). His works evoke not the ineffable but the material of sublimity owing to their sheer scale and concreteness. As Burke states: 'the mind is so entirely filled with its object, that it cannot entertain any other, nor by consequence reason on that object which employs it' (Burke, 1987, p.57). The experience of being in Serra's sculpture creates what Kant calls "*boundless*" encounter: (Guyer, 1992, p.71) a formlessness in which defines comprehension – comparable to Rothko's sublimity. However Serra's participant is continuously conscious of the phenomenon, its logic pronounced, avoids transcendence by means of maintaining specificity of site and its context.



Interior Richard Serra's *Open Ended* Gagosian Gallery 2008



Mark Rothko *Houston Chapel*

The unexpected epiphany I experienced at the Tate forced me to confront recurrent questions of longing, emphasising the need to create a physical, active encounter as what Rothko called a “spiritual commune” (Curry Bryfogle, 1998. p.302). Rothko’s black paintings (1964-1970) seemed synonymous with the metaphysical perceptions I had discovered in Sufism. My response identified contemplation as a defining characteristic of my work and signalled my development towards a transcendent discourse.

During a tutorial discussion, my supervisors acknowledged the experience as the principle driving force within my practice. This encouraged further research and I decided to examine the encounter and ask the question, *how does an epiphany take place in and through a work of art?*

*

An epiphany is described in the English dictionary as a moment of awakening and a sudden intuitive understanding in which a person may realise the manifestation of the divine. In the Judo-Christian tradition as stated by Ginette Paris ‘ the word epiphany means the miraculous appearance of God in the material world, but the Greek sense of the word is less extraordinary. It means a sort of luminosity through which the divine signifies its presence. This is the sense that Jung gives the word. For him, an epiphany is the same thing as a manifestation of the archetype or what he calls a *numinous experience*’ (Paris, 1997, p.96).

In the Islamic tradition it is encouraged to view each moment as a continual epiphany, awakening man’s consciousness to the manifestation of God’s existence in all things. As observed in the rhetorical language of the *Quran*, ‘We shall show them Our signs upon the horizons and in themselves until it is clear to them that He is the Real’ (Qur’an 41:53).

The Quranic statement promoted further consideration of how an epiphany may be experienced and understood in our daily lives; there are key moments in a person’s life in which our consciousness is radically changed to a new paradigm or shift in consciousness. These moments often occur at times of great hardship or in the shadows of sorrow, where an opening out or sensate receptivity to the world takes place, providing greater insight and guiding the person back into the light of equanimity and understanding.

To quote from Carl Jung’s *Aion*, ‘no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognising the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge’ (Hull, 1978, p.8).

Sometimes we receive an epiphany as if it were a gift – a much-needed breakthrough in consciousness that clears our way forward, altering our perception in a positive and meaningful way. I considered how an epiphany might be understood and discovered through an intentional practice such as the act of painting or meditation. The experience of either can lead to a continual awakening informing every moment, altering our capacity for comprehension and the quality of our perception.

Within my experience of painting and meditation, I have understood that epiphanies are realised through two aspects of consciousness: the intuition and the intellect. The intellect provides a contextual harness leading to a cognitive apprehension. The intellect has the power to conceptualize phenomena and give it form by separating it from its continuum. The essential nature of the intuition, as Bergson explains, 'is to perceive a thing within it's own continuum... things and states are only views taken by our mind of becoming...there are no things, only actions' (Bergson, 1999, p.12).

Bergson insists 'that we must not confuse intuition with mere feeling or emotion. Nor should we think of it as depending on some special faculty, having a non-natural origin. Intuition is rather an act, or a series of acts, of direct participation in the immediacy of experience' (Bergson, 1999, p12). In both art and meditation practice this may be understood in comparative experiences known as the *zone*, a creative state in which the intellect and the intuition become one and a sense of wholeness is achieved, leading to creative insights which become manifest in action.



Mark Rothko exhibition at the Tate, London, December 2008

How is vision assimilated into the experience of the body and how do we comprehend that experience? Maurice Merleau-Ponty through his work with the phenomenal and corporeal aspects of perception articulates; 'the painter takes his body with him, indeed we cannot imagine how a mind could paint. It is by lending his body to the

world that the artist changes the world into paintings. To understand these transubstantiations we must go back to the working, actual body – not the body as a chunk of space or a bundle of functions, but that body which is an intertwining of vision and movement’ (Johnson, 1993 p.124). If Merleau-Ponty is correct, there can be no separation between the person who sees and what is seen. The body is immersed in the experience or phenomena of the work, and comprehends the work through intuitive and intellectual processes that are both active and participatory.



Caspar David Friedrich *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* 1918



WM Turner *Snow Storm* 1842

The Sublime Tradition

My creative practice has always been drawn towards the Sublime as a tradition. Its development and critique is to be found in theories of Longinus, Burke, Chittick and Kant. I have supplemented these theories with a range of literary readings that include the Quran, Wordsworth and the documentary prose of Shreider and W.S. Sebald.

Ideas of the sublime are to be found in the earliest Greek rhetorical literature and extend to the present destructive spectacle of September 11th exemplified in the writings of Slavoj Žižek. The sublime slips from the limits of everyday comprehension, failing comparison and marking the confines of reason; simultaneously suggesting something beyond its margins. Almost every aspect of my theoretical and creative endeavour has been driven by the idea of the Sublime.

Theorists: Longinus and Burke on the Sublime

In the '*Abstract Sublime*', (Rosenblum, 1961, p.109) Robert Rosenblum makes reference to 'representations of boundless space' and 'a shapeless expanse', found in the work of William Turner and Caspar David Friedrich, whose work begins to map Mark Rothko's own practice.

The qualities of 'boundless, shapeless expanse' is first given prominence and expressed in the 1st Century AD treatise '*On The Sublime*' by Longinus, the literary form emphasizes the ecstatic: the out of body, the mind, the idea. The sublime is characterized on the one hand by metaphors of ascension, spirit, height, transcendence and the metaphysical; and on the other hand, freedom from contamination, impurity or taint. Longinus equates the sublime with the expression of great spirit, that which is associated with flame – the flame that destroys the body or reduces matter.

The sublime is to 'lift up the soul; to exalt it into ecstasy; so that, participating as it were, of the splendor's of the divinity it becomes filled with joy and exaltation, as if it had itself conceived the lofty sentiments which it heard' (Walter, 2010, p. 81).

The sublime works to raise our faculties to the pitch of grandeur – this conforms to standard dictionary definitions that stress height: lofty, towering, belonging to the highest regions of thought, reality or human activity. As Longinus states: 'For grandeur produces ecstasy rather than persuasion in the hearer; and the combination of wonder and astonishment always proves superior to the merely persuasive and pleasant...' He continues; 'persuasion is on the whole something we can control, whereas amazement and wonder exert invincible power and force and get the better of every hearer' (Shaw, 2006 p.13).

Longinus's discourse proposes a sublime experience that overpowers and commands the viewer; its ecstatic uncontrollable urge compels the mind to accept beyond reason or justice. 'Sublimity...tears everything up like a whirlwind, pulverizes all facts like a thunderbolt' (Shaw, 2006. p.13). Longinus states that the sublime implies that man can, in emotions and in language, transcend the limits of the human condition through the comprehension of the absent in the empirical world. The Sublime experience has the ability to configure the mundane and the ordinary, to a place that transcends language or description.

Longinus's expression of the sublime as *ecstatic* (Shaw, 2006, p13) evoked my own metaphysical experience but paradoxically over time I sought an alternative that called upon the authority of human experience, represented in the rhetoric of Edmund Burke's psychological enquiry.



W. Turner *Vesuvius* 1817

BURKE: *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful.*

Longinus's '*On The Sublime*' influenced a generation and Eighteenth century aesthetic philosophy and its legacy continued in Edmund Burke's *Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*. Burke's enquiry could be described as an early work of experimental psychology. He identifies the sublime as being; 'the cause of the strongest emotion that an individual is capable of feeling' (Burke, 1987, p.39). Therefore the Sublime maybe defined as pain, fear or terror. Burke traces the source of the sublime to 'whatever is in any way terrible...or operates in a manner analogous to terror' (Burke, 1987, p.39).

Burke's emphasis on the psychological parts company with the classical tradition of the sublime. He examines the interrelationship of sensation, imagination and judgment in the experience of pleasure and pain. In addition to his emphasis on terror, Burke examines the psychological experience of beauty and pain and develops a theory of aesthetic opposition, in which beauty is derived from pleasure and sublimity from pain.

Burke fashions an aesthetic concept of the sublime testing it against an encounter with nature. He associates the sublime with anything that induces astonishment, ‘When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight and are simply terrible; but at a certain distance and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful’ (Burke, 1987, p.39). Burke suggests terror may be enjoyed but from a certain distance, and the sublime experience is mediated by impulses to survive in the face of danger.

Burke’s inference is that relief from the immediacy of terror ignites a sensual experience and the sublime spectacle is perceived as beautiful. It is at this point Burke’s sublime dialectic is founded; the powerful and intense sensations of awe and terror are sublime opposed to the beautiful, which merely cultivates pleasure, love, gentleness or sympathy ...’a sense of loveliness, are the softer virtues; easiness of temper, compassion, kindness, and liberality...concern to society, and of less dignity’ (Burke, 1987, p39).

Burke advances a fundamental characteristic of the sublime: ‘we submit to what we admire’ - the sublime, while ‘we love what submits to us’ (Burke, 1987, p.113) - the beautiful. Whereas the former incites awe and a dark incomprehensible power, positioning the *sublime* in the masculine. He regards *beauty* as pleasing and feminine, consigning its power into the ordinary of social convention. He argues that convention can undermine the sublime, emasculating its intensity and delivering it to the ranks of the familiar in which awe and terror are restrained and domesticated. The surprising conclusion to his enquiry is his real fear; the spectacle of awe-inspiring terror is inevitably subordinated by the conventions of beauty.

William Chittick : Signs of God in Creation

To ascertain a comprehensive view of the sublime tradition in regard to my own cultural experience, I decided to make a comparison between the Western philosophical tradition of the sublime and an Islamic theological understanding.

There is no such concept as the sublime within the Islamic tradition. There are however a number of accounts that describe the experience of an epiphany as central to that tradition. The primary source of the religion, the Quran, was revealed to the

Prophet Muhammad over a long period of time as whole verses; these instances describe perfectly the moment of an epiphany. In this first moment of the revelation, the form of the Angel Gabriel appeared and commanded the unlettered Prophet to read. After the Prophet declared three times that he was unable to read, the angel seized the Prophet, wrapping his arms around him and simultaneously transmitted the word of God into his very being.



The cave Hira, where the Holy Prophet Mohammed retreated and first received the revelation of the Quran .

The transmission of knowledge from the Angel Gabriel to the Prophet occurred in such a way as to subvert the need for Muhammad to actually read the Word of God. Instead the knowledge was revealed in such a way as to facilitate the Prophet's ability to recite, through speech, what he had assimilated and allow others to transcribe his speaking of what is understood as revelation. In Arabic this is called *nisbah*, which defines this particular affinity, or spiritual transmission between the Prophet and the Angel. Within Islam the Prophet represents the embodiment of Quranic knowledge, the holder of God's word. The metaphysical exchange is central to the tradition of Islam, and the transfer of knowledge embodied in the consciousness of the Prophet could be understood as an epiphany.



Muslim pilgrims praying around the Kabba in Mecca

In order to examine an epiphany and the experience central to the sublime from an Islamic tradition we must call upon the intellectual treatises that have described and given language to what is often an ineffable experience of the divine. In Islamic theology Creation is seen as a grand and coherent panorama displaying the signs of God. Its magnificence has been interpreted and understood through the guidance of the Qur'an, reflected in the Muslim's testament to faith, 'There is no God, but God'. Everything that exists is of God and from God. God's self-disclosure is apprehended through the language of signs signified as characteristics, or attributes revealed in what the *Hadith* (Prophet's sayings) calls "al asna al husna" - the ninety-nine Most Beautiful Names of God (Chittick and Murata, 2006, p.45).



Muslims in contemplation in mosque



Islamic calligraphy citing the names of Allah



Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim – In the name of Allah the Beneficent and the Merciful.

In *The Vision of Islam*, the Islamic scholar William Chittick classifies the names into three categories, first the names of God's essence, secondly the names of his Attributes that name the characteristics of God, and thirdly, the name of the acts of God which are revealed in the Qur'an and define the history of Creation. The acts of God can be understood through two complimentary types of encounter with God – *tanzih*, which describe the perception of God's distance and *tasbeeh*, which describes God's nearness. These two concepts are important when we come to understand how our conscious mind (the intellect) and our ability to embody knowledge through our intuition enable us to comprehend the sublime experience as a sign with characteristics that leads the beholder to an understanding beyond the cognitive.

The comparison between Burke's sublime and the Islamic understanding of the experience allowed for a cross-cultural consideration. Its point of alignment – the relationship between (*tanzih*) distance and (*tasbeeh*) nearness, the axis of cognitive understanding is encountered in the sublime moment – 'when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are, delightful...' (Burke, 1987, p.39).

The two complimentary modes of human understanding, the intellect and intuition, can find a helpful parallel in terms of *Tanzih*, which is present in God's distance from us and found in properties such as otherness, transcendence and inaccessibility. The intellect is a reflective and analytical function of consciousness that, through language, is able to both name and frame an experience outside of duration. Experience, through reflection, can be objectified, analysed and 'unpacked' through logical deduction. When reason is used to comprehend God, one separates from the

experience of Him, causing difference, and thus allowing one to both reflect upon and apprehend God's attributes. The 'intellect separates things and is, according to Bergson, a kind of dream; it's not active, as all our life ought to be, but purely contemplative' (Russell, 1947, p.823).

To be conscious of *Tasbeeh* is to comprehend God's nearness, sameness and accessibility. *Tasbeeh* is often associated with an unveiling, embodiment and the imagination. Unveiling removes obscurity and confusion and allows one's vision to perceive what has always been there – as if someone opens a door and holds a light high in order to perceive the path beneath our feet. 'As a mode of knowledge, unveiling works not by dividing things, but by bringing them together. Characteristically, unveiling perceives identity, sameness, wholeness, oneness. It perceives that all things are signs of God and manifest his reality. It does not perceive this rationally and abstractly, but directly' (Chittick and Murata, 2006, p.254).

Within an Islamic framework, for an artwork to achieve union (*Tahwid*) with the viewer both *Tanzih* and *Tasbeeh* must be present, but not necessarily in equal measure. *Tasbeeh* presents the vision of God's omnipotence allowing us to recognise God's signs and draws us closer to them. *Tanzih* conceives God's immanence and distances us from that vision by its unknowable immensity. It is this characteristic that sustains longing and further questioning in the nature of what is not known of God and creativity. Islamic art-works create a narrative of viewing, first; the viewer is encouraged to recognise the signs (*Tasbeeh*) of the Divine unveiled. Second, the unveiling supports the ability to enter *Tanzih*'s vision, thereby transcending the language and form of the artwork, and the ever present 'I' of ourselves. This leaves us, with an experience of the Divine presence – an inspiration or sublimity.

The art experience in the Islamic view is an act of remembrance, allowing us to contemplate and comprehend meaning beyond form and material language. Islamic theology mobilises a rhetorical language in which both imminence and transcendence are conceived in union as one. Paradox is a consistent impulse in this enquiry and many of the decisions communicate difference as part of the creative equation. The final year's research presents a synthesis of both experiences and seeks unity in multiplicity.



Case Study. Summer Showcase: *Future Perfect 12:16* (2009 A.V.A Gallery)

Title –*Future Perfect 12:16* **Date**–2008-09 **Size**–6x3m **Material**–Pencil/Paper.

Throughout the period of writing I continued to work on a large drawing entitled *Future Perfect 12:16* and exhibited it in the Summer Showcase. The drawing features an idealised 1970 kitchen in a derelict high-rise building, reminiscent of a photographic studio. It is situated in a dystopian landscape devastated by a flood. The drawing is intended as a forewarning, a riposte to the construction boom taking place in Addis Ababa, where I am currently building a residence. The work portrays Ethiopia's commercial ferocity and equates it to the sublime encounter that is observed from a safe distance, afforded to an outsider or a *foreigner*. Thus summoning Burke's Sublime witness, ... 'at a certain distance ... a delight' (Burke, 1987, p.39).

The scene unfolds similar to a Japanese scroll, positioning viewers at its centre and guiding through the narrative in stages. The aspirant kitchen, distinguished from the adjacent scene, discriminates against the dark and gloomy space of the discarded stage props. Both spaces attempt to convey distinctive aspects of human desires and emotions.

I intended viewers to be absorbed into the scale of the work and immersed in time as the viewer comprehends the subject. Its scale influenced by Rothko's statement; 'The reason I paint them...is precisely because I want to be very intimate and

human...However you paint the larger picture, you are in it. It isn't something you command' (Gage, 2000, p.284). The intention was to create a detached work, a requirement in Sufi training and celebrated in the Sufi idiom; *to be in the world but not part of it*. I sought a sentiment of loss or passing, reminiscent of a vacation that one day would come to an end. The same is true of life. Time is the central theme and the drawing tries to capture its transience.

Two art professionals were invited to the 2009 seminar in which this drawing was exhibited, the writer Martin Holeman and Paul Hedge, director of Hales Gallery. Their general critique was positive; Hedge emphasized the contextual position and considered American artists who create large drawings. He was encouraging and praised the ambition of the large scale, which promotes a drawing as object/installation. Martin Holeman applauded the skill of the drawing but asked questions of its content exclaiming, " I don't get it....what's it for?" He usefully pushed for greater thematic clarity.

The display of the large drawing in the first year exhibition and this discussion led me to reconsider two points. Firstly, scale and site specific installation are the means of controlling the co-ordinates for intimate contemplation as exemplified through Rothko and Serra's work



R.Serra Installation shot- at Gogosian Gallery

Secondly, distance can be used to impart a sense of security in the viewer, and allows for a safe place from which to 'witness'. Creating the conditions for detached viewing would become a significant formal concern of my work.

Second year: Themes of Research: Romantic Landscape

After the completion of the Doctorate Proposal I entered the studio with the firm intention of acting upon the research as outlined in the proposal. The text created a critical distance in relation to my creative practice and recognised an essential artistic driver; to make a contemplative work of art that had the potential of manifesting a transcendent experience.



Garry Doherty 12:35 oil/panel 25x30cm



Garry Doherty 12:36 oil/panel 25x30cm

In the studio I was determined to critically advance the creative practice and a hypothetical question arose; “*what does a transcendent object look like*”. The investigation initiated greater experimentation focusing on two areas: themes and their display.

I returned to the sublime landscape tradition as a theme and tried to capture a journey from safe refuge to exposure in the landscape. The true subject of the landscape is to locate the viewers into their own subjectivity. To achieve this, I removed recognisable features of place, to emphasise the feeling of space being passed through, like looking out of the window on a train. I decided to make small, intimate paintings depicting large spaces, both to find myself within the painting and to draw the viewer into the emotional space. The vacant imagery emphasises movement, evokes infinite space and absorbs the imagination into its confines.

I tried to capture the light using oil paint that can be extended into transparent glazed films. This captures the illusory nature of light within the painting. A formal clarity gradually developed: properties of colour, light, reflection and atmosphere increasingly became important characteristics to erode the subject. The light delivers the viewer into its illuminated surface and directs the coordinates for transcendence.

According to Adorno: ‘The more spiritual works of art are, the more they erode their surface. Silence is an articulation of the immaterial, it transcends the limit of art to a point of annihilating it, in attempting to realise its deepest essence’ (Bass and Jacob, 2004, p.68).



Garry Doherty *Golda Meir's bedroom 12:30* 20x18cm



Garry Doherty *Golda Meir's bedroom 12:31* 20x18cm oil/panel

Presentation: *Studio Experiments*

I began constructing small sets incorporating lights and placing everyday objects in front of the camera lens. I transformed the original image through experimenting with the field of focus, shooting through everyday kitchen objects and putting textures against the lens. The effect was to place the viewer in the space as a witness who would experience a non-literal space and ethereal light, both qualities of the sublime. The dappled light effects erode the image, reinforcing the surface as a concrete fact, reminiscent of the work of Rothko.



Garry Doherty *Golda Meir's Dining Room* 25 x18cm oil/panel

In a work-in-progress seminar, I presented working photographic models and untitled paintings. Staff and students asked: “Instead of representing light in painting, can you use actual projected light?” This made me start to think about diversifying my methodology to use actual light, but it took two more years before I began to do this through sculpture.

I returned to the Romantic landscapes and included these in the Munich Project and used them to extend the narrative, suggesting a *journey*, evoking a passage towards the event– the *1972 Munich Olympics*. When I exhibited the works in the mid-term doctorate exhibition a member of staff remarked on their mood, comparing their analytical illusions to the novels of documentary fiction writer W.G. Sebald



Garry Doherty Munich oil/panel 30x20



Garry Doherty Munich 12:37 oil/panel 30x20

Throughout the second year I continued research on the sublime. I was instinctively attracted to the work of writer W.S. Sebald and artist Thomas Demand, both working out of the documentary tradition prevalent in German artists’ work after the catastrophe of the war. Although a deviation from the principal concern of my research, the documentary genre helped me to explore the factual aspects of the subject matter and related to my method of constructing models.



T. Demand *Stasi Central Office* 1995



W.S. Sebald *Illustration Austerlitz*

SECOND YEAR TEXT

W.S. Sebald–Austerlitz. Thomas Demand–Tunell.

Paul Schrader–Transcendent Style in Film

I decided to read Sebald's book *Austerlitz*, a documentary travelogue that blends memoir and fiction. It investigates history and the power of memory, a subject which became relevant to my work. The novel charts the course of a thirty-year conversation recounted in train stations and nondescript places where travellers stop and meet across Europe. The exchange takes place between an unidentified chronicler (the author) and the protagonist, Jacques Austerlitz. Austerlitz has no conscious memory of his early childhood and seeks an explanation of his origin and true identity.

An architectural historian by profession, Austerlitz describes in minute detail an array of arcane topics from the architecture of Brussels to lunar cartography. The minutiae of the facts, represented by intriguing small photographs, digress from the narrative, signifying a history slowly uncovering its memory. Sebald's writing deals with how history is interpreted, exposing the tensions between the collective memory and individual perception.



Illustrations from WS Sebald *Austerlitz*



The narrative is concerned with the universal human need to search for personal truth and a distinct identity, in a complicated world of information. In this search and to protect from the trauma of the past, memories are arranged in a logical and coherent way. I began to see comparisons between the novel and my own methodology such as the assistance of history to unearth one's identity and the display of artifice to expose the construct of that identity to itself. The excavation of memory creates a lucid memorial, a concrete object to honour our personal history in order to transcend it through art.



Illustration insert W.S. Sebald *Austerlitz*



Garry Doherty Munich 12:38 oil/panel 29x20

The novel recalled the work of another German artist, Thomas Demand, drawing comparison to his recent photographs displaying the social and historical events in Germany since 1945. The artist culls his subjects from the mass media and exactly transposes the photographic image into a three-dimensional paper sculpture, which is photographed again. The life-size photographs present a neutral examination; their detachment evokes the residue of a traumatic history trying to come to terms with itself. The nondescript spaces compel the viewer's curiosity, capturing our gaze and binding us inside the scene as it unravels. We become spectators to the aftermath of a disturbing historical event committing us to witness the past as a source of pain for the future. In a review for the *Guardian*, Adrian Searle notes: 'His images have an emotional flatness, a palpable air of numb fixation ...no signs of use or wear in his images...His work is equivalent to the inert affectless prose of a police report' (Searle, 2006).

The melancholia experienced in the work of the both the German artist and the writer is reminiscent of the collective trauma within the nation's psyche. The difficulty of the German people in coming to terms with such horrific events prevented later generations from engaging in the trauma, causing an impasse in establishing a new future for Germany. Tammy Clewell's commentary on Freud presents an explanation of how to deal with the weight of history, she states: 'The work of mourning entails a kind of hyper remembering, a process of obsessive recollection... replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence. This magical restoration of the lost object enables the mourner to assess the value of the relationship and comprehend what he or she has lost in losing the other' (Clewell, 2002, p.44) Sebald's book *Austerlitz* and Demand's photographs act together as an allegory for modern Europe's evasion of its own political history, commanding us to remember in order to go forward.



Thomas Demand *Tunnel* 2min film loop 1999

In March (2010) I extended my own creative methodology, turning my attention towards video as a means of recording and documenting my work. I gained confidence in this decision after seeing Demand's first film entitled *Tunnel* (1999), which is a reconstruction of the thirty- four meter section of tunnel Pont d'Alma in Paris, the location of Princess Diana's car crash where she met her untimely death in August 1997. Demand's choice of film to document the event is intriguing, as it replicates the actions of the media as they attempt to uncover the truth behind the story. The incident became larger than life owing to the questionable role the paparazzi played in the unfolding of this event.

In an interview Demand expands on his decision to use film: 'Film takes my work from the plane to the fourth dimension – movement' (Demand, 2009 p.4). Recording in real time and moving the camera through space reinstates the importance of the original sculpture. It confounds the references further as it throws its artificiality into doubt causing a sense of *déjà vu* in the viewer.

The two -minute film loop follows the motion of a vehicle speeding through a tunnel; the camera records the road markings and pillars as they flash by. The film begins and ends with the crash. The repetition of the sequence implies the conception of cyclical time, forever repeating the same tragic events. The cyclical pattern of existence is best represented in the Hindu concept of the wheel of life, the endless cycle of birth, life and death from which one seeks liberation through the attainment of enlightenment.

Studio Experiments: Documentaries

In the studio I considered the theoretical research and drew a parallel between the sequential structure of filmmaking and the documentary fiction of W.S. Sebald. I decided to experiment with the way I document the models by replacing the photographic still camera with a camcorder, recording the imagery in real time. The effect on my painting practice was profound; the windowpane through which the viewer perceives the painted world was now broken, its integrity reduced to constituent parts, indicative of a film stage set. The stasis of painting was liberated by seeing *in time* and transformed into a practice simulating the rhetoric of film.

Stimulated by Demand's photographic facsimiles of model replicas, of sites of historical significance. His video *Tunnel* (1999), inspired further research and I started working on concept drawings for the experimental models. The concept drawings represent sculptural configurations made from metal that support images and a range of objects presented before them. The sculptural framework referred to a system, reminiscent of computer drawings. Within the middle of the system a monorail is placed, transporting the camcorder through the forest of objects and transmitting it live to a monitor for viewing.

The self-reflective nature of the system permits the viewer access to the space/time that exists between the images and the objects. The sculpture explores these pathways exposing their illusory nature and the deceptive power of narrative. In a work-in-progress seminar, a student responded to the proposed work and said I "was trying to build a time machine that analyses its own journey". This comment was encouraging as a self-reflective system is in the nature of my spiritual practice.

The changes in my working methods and processes further explored my research question, *what does a transcendent object look like?* This was the conceptual breakthrough I was looking for. I started a group of works that established a multi-disciplinary practice mobilising the same narrative over a range of display strategies. Its success brought greater transparency to the Socratic dialogue, consequently ensuring the confirmation of the second year's stated intention; "... the necessity to make an artwork a self-conscious environment mindful of its own phenomenological being, an object of consciousness that exposes its own internal dynamic system to itself and successively transcends its own appearance."



Robert Bresson *Les Anges du péché* 1943.



C.T. Dryer *Traial of joan of Ark* 1928

Demand's video inspired a search for theoretical writing on spirituality in film. I discovered a book entitled *The Transcendental Style in Film* by Paul Schrader. The author attempts to define, 'what is transcendent in film' (Schrader, 1972, p.86) and gives it a classification. In his thesis, he analyses the films of three great directors from different cultures, Ozu, Bresson and Dreyer, who have developed a transcendental style to express the sacred.

Paul Schrader: *The Transcendent Style in film*

Schrader conveys the difficulty in defining the transcendent due to its multiple interpretations throughout history, which renders its terminology vague and confused. 'The transcendent is currently a catchall term for the imprecise film critics' (Schrader, 1972, p.5). In order to identify it, Schrader evaluates critical patterns of its use to form a consensus assembling a convincing classification. His critical method categorises the transcendental into three terms representing a hierarchy of spiritual consciousness from the divine-oriented to human-centred.

1. **The transcendent** – Beyond normal sense experience, the immanent or what Rudolf Otto called the 'Wholly Other'
2. **The transcendental** – human act or artefacts, which express something of the transcendent – e.g. Byzantine icons or Zen gardens
3. **Transcendence** – A term that brings expressive emphasis to the human experience of the transcendent but is not transcendental i.e. Expressionist paintings or psychological novels about religious conversion. (Schrader, 1972, p.5-7).

Schrader continues to describe a transcendental art: ‘The proper function... is to express the Holy itself (the transcendent), and not to express or illustrate holy feelings.’ In his thesis, he identifies “poverty of means,” as a common attribute used to describe the experience of the sacred: ‘The more a work of art can successfully incorporate sparse means within an abundant society, the nearer it approaches its ‘transcendental end’ (Schrader, 1972, p.155).

In his conclusion he explains further that the employment of sparse artistic means ‘builds a spiritual momentum’ from the temporal, towards poverty of style that results in stasis. He concludes that, ‘Transcendental style takes the viewer through the trials of experience to the expression of the transcendent; returning the viewer to experience the calm regions of untouched vagaries of emotion, bringing us nearer to that silence, that invisible image---to a space beyond the province of art.’ (Schrader, 1972, p.169)

Studio Experiments: Installations

I constructed several installations using circular fluorescent lights and passed a moving camera through the centre of each installation, recording its journey. The aim was to produce an abstract landscape illuminated with circular lamps as a metaphor for journeying towards the light. It failed because I lacked the technical expertise to construct the infrastructure of the sculpture. In addition, the sculptural concept wasn’t successful in conveying the journey from a worldly place to an inner place of light because it had no anchor in a worldly place. I abandoned these experiments temporarily, considering them technically and conceptually unresolved. However, I returned to this way of working in the fourth year.



G. Doherty Studio Light Installation experiment

Exhibition Case Study: *Munich 12:40-45* *Prof Doc Summer Showcase 2009*



To meet the demands of exhibiting, I withdrew from displaying the unfinished sculptural/installations and retreated to well-rehearsed painting, resulting in a series of small paintings entitled, *Munich 12:40-45* and displayed consecutively in the Summer Doctorate Showcase 2010.



Garry Doherty *Munich 12:40* oil/panel 20x29cm



Garry Doherty *Munich 12:41* oil/panel 20x29cm



Garry Doherty *Munich 12:42* oil/panel 20x29cm

At this point there was a shift in my subject matter. I wanted to see whether traumatic subjects could be transformed by using the transcendent qualities of light and ethereal space in my earlier work. Determined to critically advance my painting practice I decided to test the use of social-political subject matter, choosing for the first time a controversial historic subject: the 1972 Olympic Games. The subject addressed my own religious and political convictions. During the games the innocent members of the Israeli team were brutally murdered by a Palestinian group; 'Black September'. The image depicts an innocent looking hallway, at the end of which the terrible crime took place. Its supposed innocence could be a common tower block, but on closer inspection the utopian Olympic architecture (1972) becomes apparent. It instils threat to an everyday scene that is on first reading a romantic image. On further analysis the scene demonstrates its artifice and illustrates its methods of manufacture. The construction of the model appears at the bottom and the centre of image and reflects the equipment in the studio. The ambition was to mirror the viewer's position suggesting an inclusion in the drama, reminiscent of media involvement in the unfolding event. From the work's display we infer the consecutive documentation of the tragic moment. The aspiration of the work was to recall a moment from history and place it in the continuum of today.



Garry Doherty *Munich 12:43* oil/panel 20x29cm



Garry Doherty *Munich 12:44* oil/panel 20x29cm

I continued with traditional painting methods, but the glazing technique acquired a new importance. The paint film became thinner, allowing for greater transparency and reflective of a more relaxed open-ended approach. The mimetic description of earlier work was reconsidered, allowing for open brushwork in some areas of the painting. The emerging openness revealed the importance of the schematic format; it harnessed both intuitive and analytical aspects of engagement. The working methods uncovered two formal strategies at work: first, an open approach exposing the literalness of technique, thus changing the speed of reception and the emotive power of the delivery. Second the mimetic copy of a photographic model that records the surface skin thereby reinforces its concrete fact.

The theoretical and creative research positioned my practice within the historical painting tradition. Its convention inspired two tactical attitudes: to recreate a historic event as if it were a documentary and expose the artifice of manufacture to itself. As a consequence, the existing illusions are opposed and a new transparent space opened in which old forms can be reconciled or transcended. The intention was to redeem the trauma of history, and create a space for the viewer to meditate on history and rethink its presence in the continuum of the current cultural debate.

The Forum 2010

At the summer forum the gallery director, Andrew Mummery critiqued the work asking an important question; ‘can a figurative work of art represent history in the light of photography?’ I replied, ‘yes, painting has the ability to work outside of the instant moment....In doing so it reconsiders the past under the conditions of the present. Yesterday’s history becomes the individual’s responsibility today.’

During the second and third year, an Islamic socio-political narrative materialised as a common theme. Paradoxically, it seemed to oppose the transcendent statement. For example, how could one effectively portray a transcendent artwork of the Munich Olympic assassinations? Political events of this order appear impossible to redeem or transcend. They have their authority in fact and any attempt at aestheticising seems morally inappropriate.

Conversely, inspiration was found in the teachings of my spiritual teacher, who continually helped students to redeem their own past actions in order to transform their present being. Two examples further exemplified this narrative: The inspirational story of moral certitude established in the life of a Buddhist monk, who meditated for peace on a flame lit from the burning embers of Hiroshima; and the western tradition of representing the Crucifixion. Both examples activate the idea of redemption in order to transcend the horrors of the event.



Budhist Monk *meditating on flame*



Andrea Mantegna *Crucifixion* 1459

During year three, I tried in vain to realise the transcendent intentions within the paradox of a socio-political subject. At times the work appeared inconsistent due to a failure of confidence in the face of emotional complexity. The predicament came to a head during the fourth year of the Doctorate when traumatic events featuring Muslim communities mediated for western consumption made me more conscious of my

cultural perspective as a British Muslim. Muslim political groups were committing terrorist attacks, while at the same time Muslim communities were being demonised in the press. These contradictions disturbed me and unearthed an unconscious psychological driver, a consequence of a traumatic separation experienced as a child. The need to cure a trauma mobilised past and present unconscious forces to discover an antidote for their distress.



200 suicide bombers are on the loose in UK

Ministers warned of Olympic threat



Left ... Saajid Bhatti, and right, Mubashir Ali Khan

Bombers are on the loose in UK Ministers warned of Olympic threat

(The Sun 2012)

The Sun article exemplifies how some British media sensationalise and use stereotypical language to frame an unbalanced discourse in the narration of the Muslim subject. The story is designed to establish fear and hysteria in the reader contributing to xenophobia. The article reinforces an idea that all Muslims are terrorists; thereby positioning Islam as an enemy within a western community. In the 2012 report, *Media and Muslims in the UK*, Kate Sian states, 'constructed as backwards, primitive, excessively religious and oppressive, in short they occupy the 'enemy' role, this is contrasted to the west who are represented as enlightened, modern, free' (<http://hnurl.com/dybee9h>).

THIRD YEAR TEXT

Mythic archetypes

The third year text concentrated on identifying a transcendent narrative in order to find a subject for painting. Nonetheless, I was apprehensive about the socio/political themes, uncertain I could marshal the authority needed to transcend them. Therefore I purposefully sought a transcendent subject in the theoretical research. I focussed on the expression of moral narrative found in Medieval painting, a Sufi teaching story used to elucidate the journey through the soul, and the work of Bill Viola. This inquiry directed my investigation to the medieval paintings hung in the Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery.



As the visitor ascends Venturi's monumental flight of stairs, their toil is soon rewarded with a gift- Botticini's 'Assumption of the Virgin'. The witty curatorial placement allows for further escalation beyond this world and into the golden light of the next.

Religious imagery dominated Medieval and early Renaissance art and Biblical subjects were often a rich source of expression to illustrate transcendent narratives such as *The Last Judgment*. These narrated events were originally intended to help elucidate the illiterate, the church intent on asserting clarity of moral vision in the viewer.

In the gallery my attention was first drawn to the material nature of the paintings, their architectonic presence allowed them to advance from the wall and into the physical space of the viewer. Their concreteness contravened the common reading of a painting as a window through which an illusionary world is experienced. Instead, their physicality asserts the corporeal, stressing a literal interpretation rather than synthesized illusions. This realisation awakened my own creative intentions to present narrative subjects in actual space, permitting the factual nature of the material world to question the illusionary appearance of the image.



: Dalmatian Altarpiece National Gallery London

A common theme throughout the paintings was the depiction of a transcendent space either embodied in nature or manifest in man. Its depiction expressed symbolically rather than experientially. In the Dalmatian polyptych altarpiece, (*room 1*) stories of the Apostles and saints are recounted around the central omnipresent image of the Virgin Mary. The narrative divided over multiple panels, implies a cyclical time in which the trials of men are secured by the grace of the virgin. The cyclical composition, reminiscent of the sequential frame found in filmmaking, animates the phenomenon of motion. The effect of time transports the narrative from the painted space and into the present space of the viewer, allowing them to consider their own morality in the present time frame.

The word *animation* is derived from the Latin *anima*, and is related to the Christian concept of soul. ‘Animation’ would be the technique of giving soul to inanimate objects or paintings, allowing the viewer to identify with the message thereby transmitting a moral state of being.

Considering the medieval works in the National Gallery rejuvenated my experiments with sculpture/installation. The questions raised were: *How do I establish a multi-disciplinary creative practice, integrating two-dimensional objects, sculptural video installations and a transcendent content? Can it be displayed over a range of media platforms and What is the relationship between the constituent parts?*

The sculpture techniques used in assembly were crude and unrefined, e.g. glue, tape and bolts. Thus, the work had the playful appearance of a children's experiment. After their completion I proposed to make their construction more sophisticated, aiming to make highly polished sculptural systems evocative of science fiction satellites.



12:25. Professional Doctorate mid year exhibition. A.V.A. Gallery. 2010

Case Study: *Winter Olympics 12:25.* ' Prof'Doc interim exhibition. AVA Gallery

In the spring *interim exhibition* I undertook a speculative venture and decided to try to make a sculptural environment in the confines of the gallery. I began by mounting a drawing on an adapted tripod as if it were a film screen. This permitted the work to read in space rather than on the wall. The drawing depicts a wintery scene of a gate guarding the entrance to the Winter Olympics. Initially the image appears cosy and comfortable, until one soon realised the gate is reminiscent of a hidden encampment. At the bottom of the image the wires and the studio context are visible. A sculptural

object suggestive of an ironing board presents an array of objects, a plastic bag, fan, mirror, light and surveillance camera. The lens of the live video camera purveys the scene and transmits it to the TV monitor placed on the floor. The TV image presents an ideal landscape concealing the artifice from view.



Detail 12:25 Professional Doctorate mid year exhibition. A.V.A. Gallery. 2010

This was the first comprehensive attempt to actualise the stated ambition in the 2010 report. “to make an artwork a self conscious environment mindful of its own phenomenological being,” There were a number of positive results from the experiment. It was my first attempt to integrate all elements of the practice together and set up a kind of Socratic dialogue across exhibition platforms.

In the exhibition seminar the feedback was positive; a number of students thought it was an interesting and successful formal progression. One student commented that the spatial language of the work recalled a Caro sculpture. Another student thought it was closer to a Heath Robinson experiment. The work demonstrates attitudes from both, but I wanted a work less idiosyncratic, to make for greater possibilities of a transcendental viewing encounter. A member of staff also advised a research into contemporary ritualistic films.

This recognition forced me to consider other contemporary artists who employ modern instances of ritual experience. The connection between film and transcendent narratives brought a direct comparison to Bill Viola’s video installations. He is a pioneer of modern materials and methods of production while continuing to apply the spiritual foundations of older technologies. He brings the mind of a modern American mystic to bear upon the contemporary world of video installation.

In a number of video installations, Viola uses the single image of a body as the place to manifest a transcendent space in which the trials of existence are enacted. The body is the theatre for transformation, where visceral memory of ephemeral states is recorded and grounded in being. In *Spirit and Medium*, David Morgan comments on the role of ritual in Viola's video work. 'The body is where awakening happens. It is the medium of transformation. Its sensations are the very language of myth, the place where spiritual domains intersect with the ordinary world of time and space. Myth and ritual are grounded in the body, making it the register of transcendence' (Morgan, 2004, p.103).

The ritual act of viewing is an important feature in Viola's installations. He is mindful of the cognitive nature of the body and the self-conscious experience of the spectator as he encounters the theatrical spectacle of the installation. In *The Crossing*, (1996) two monumental video screens project images of two men. Both emerge from the darkness and walk towards the plane of the screen to confront the viewer. On one side the man slowly becomes engulfed by flames, his clothes blacken in the sonic roar only to return to the dark void of the screen. Simultaneously, on the second screen a man is overwhelmed by a cascade of water crashing over his body, eventually retreating once again into the vacant void.



Bill Viola. *The Crossing*, 1996.

The installation is a provocative metaphor in which the elemental forces of nature slowly annihilate the body of man. The visual narrative confronts the viewer, placing them at the centre of the experience and forces them to enact the cosmic principles within themselves. The beauty of the theatrical spectacle momentarily placates the

viewer and transmutes the body into a shamanistic dream sequence beyond the realm of the everyday and into a space beyond. In an interview Viola demonstrates his intentions as, ‘ desire to create a space, an absolutely real, objective representation of the place where death is—to make a work not about death but a place beyond death’ (Morgan, 2004, p.94).

The elemental cycle engages man in a never ending journey, evoking the mythic archetypes of the past and exploring the themes of human existence: Individuality, birth death and the passing of souls through the waters of the temporal world and into the afterlife. This is Reminiscent of the Biblical last judgment in which the soul awaits sentence in fear of the fires of hell and in hope of the resurrection to the peace of heaven. The curator G. Hanhardt states in the Guggenheim catalogue; *Going forth by day*, 2002. ‘The work serves to create an epic articulation of the passage of nature’s cycles and offers mythic reflections on temporal flow of birth and regeneration’ (Guggenheim Gallery, 2002).

The ‘mythic reflections’ in Viola’s project are primarily concerned with the nature of the human condition, which can be defined as a set of contingencies confronted by man in the body. Man is lost in his own existential confusion and seeks answers to relieve his own suffering and loss. In this struggle he discovers the nature of the self in and through the body. The realization connects the space of our micro being to a greater cosmology. Birth, suffering, love, transcendence and death are the lexicon Viola develops to make his installations contemporary versions of earlier sacred art works.

The works acknowledge previous tragic traditions (Greek tragedy, religious altarpiece’s, art of the sublime) in which extreme passion is evoked in viewers, leaving them awe struck, moving them to tears or fear; or posing fundamental questions about man’s fate. In an interview with Doris Saatchi, Viola recounts a story of standing in front of Fra Angelico’s *Last Judgment* and breaking down in tears. “For the first time in my life I realized I was using a piece of art rather than just appreciating it. As a result I developed an interest in the nature and expression of human emotions, such as the question of whether crying is a sign of suffering or release from it’ (Lockhart Saatchi, 2003).



Fra Angelico. The Last Judgment 1435

Viola's artworks elicit similar deep feelings of awe in the spectator. Viola is aiming for the awe of the sublime, the awakening experience that disrupts the everyday, creating a cathartic event that provides a pathway to a place or state beyond. Viola's work references Burke's account of the Sublime: 'To excite the ideas of pain and danger, this is to say whatever is in any sort terrible, or conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling' (*Burke, 1987, p.39*).



Bill Viola The Crossing 1996

In the nineteenth century the artist William Blake gave an account in his notebook on the morality of sacred painting. He wrote: ‘Whenever an individual rejects error and embraces truth, a Last Judgment passes upon that individual.’ Blake continues, “‘he souls in the last judgment are not historical individuals but representative of eternal states of humanity.’ By ‘states’ Blake means two things: The imagery is archetypal, or a prototype for humanity; the second reading is of the mental states which man travels in experience. He asserts; ‘Man passes on but states remain forever; he passes thro’ them like a traveller who may as well suppose that the places he has passed thro’ exist no more. Everything is eternal’ (Preston, 1944, p.77).

Blake’s ability to transform Biblical events into personal visionary ideals is a working example and a useful approach to constructing my own moral framework for my art practice. With this in mind I began to look for an Islamic subject that could serve the same purpose. After months of searching, I found what I thought was an ideal subject – an allegorical journey through a city in Suhrawardi's treatise, *Shape of Light*.

The fable is used to expound on an ethical topic: a strange and mysterious city becomes an allegory for the journey through the created world and in the human soul, passing through states of consciousness until it reaches the final destination.

‘Walking on in a state between sleep and awakening, as if in a dream. I reached a city which contained everything which was created.....All the ugly actions, all the sins known and unknown to me, surrounded me....the city of freedom where everyone does what they please in a state of continual heedlessness, unaware of right or wrong...’(Bayrak, 1998, p.107)

In order to continue on the path the wayfarer needs to transform the inciting soul, the lowest and most egocentric of the self’s manifestations. These ailments constitute veils preventing the beholder from truly seeing or understanding the self in action. The remedies appear in the form of archetypes or character traits (humility, patience or gratitude etc), which awaken the inward eye to the self. The wayfarer journeys inward through the city until he reaches the inner City of Love and Inspiration.

Here a guide appears who will lead him on to Self-Annihilation: ‘Be nought, be nought, be nought, so that you will be forever’ (Bayrak, 1998, p.107). The wayfarer reaches a state of total emptiness necessary for the soul's return to its true destiny. After thinking I had found an appropriate spiritual narrative to base a series of work on, I became perplexed by my dissatisfaction. The Sufi fable appeared a perfectly suitable subject for a piece of work; however intuitively I found it too literal, its exemplary prose conventional. Discontented with an illustration, I required a ‘real’ spiritual journey that was active and participatory in keeping with the work of Viola, Fra Angelica and Rothko’s.

Creative Practice: 2011-2012



G.Doherty Studio photographic collage Models

My 2011 annual review recognised my attempt to draw all elements of the practice together into one whole. However I was dissatisfied with my overcomplicated idiosyncratic working methods. I was determined to eradicate this problem and sought for greater simplification in the appearance of the work.

I began by devising methods to encapsulate the working models into self-contained environments. I started to construct them in cardboard boxes, but the material carried with it narratives from the outside world. Therefore, I substituted the cardboard box with a more neutral container – an acrylic dome. The synthetic material was evocative of a hierarchical authority and reminiscent of a research laboratory or a government monitoring system.



Acrylic dome.



Security cameras.



Monitoring system.

The provisional working methods developed in the previous models began to change. From inception the acrylic containers had a greater sense of place; they encouraged a fixed point of viewing around which the scene was to be invented. Fixing the point of reference created greater formal clarity for example; the organisation of the middle and far ground, the position and direction of light. It necessitated a hierarchal grouping of imagery that controlled the formal organisation of the narrative.

My reliance on photographic material to create the subject of the work declined and I put greater trust into found everyday objects and detritus, which began to permeate the new works with a greater feeling of immediacy.

I embarked on further experimental installations, building large environments in the studio, outside in the garden and a quiet local road. Simply by placing a large polythene sheet in front of an everyday subject its appearance was transformed. The transparent sheet framed the subject and removed it from its material context and represented it as a model or image of the scene. These experiments culminated in the final showcase exhibition in 2011.



Summer Showcase 2011. Curated Group Show -- S.Mooney H.Roberts and G. Doherty

Case Study: *Bin-Laden's bedroom. Prof Doc Summer showcase*

For the Professional Doctorate Summer Showcase, I continued the experimental research with sculptural assemblages. I decided to create an environmental

installation in the confines of the gallery. I began by choosing a contentious contemporary historical subject - Bin Laden's bedroom, the site of the purported execution. I searched for documentary images and video footage on the Internet and found very little except amateur recording taken by local villagers. I liked their shaky unprofessional character; the images could have been mistaken for snapshots of any typical suburban home.



Photographic models for Bin Laden's bedroom

I commenced constructing a collaged photographic model of the scene and placed it in a Perspex globe. I located a security camera inside the globe in order to evoke a government surveillance unit used to observe sensitive territories. I positioned a silver sphere in an acrylic harness and sited it high on the wall above normal viewing height. (*240cm from the floor.*) Inside the sphere the surveillance camera recorded the collaged model as if it were the actual scene and projected it onto the wall at floor height. A circular painting hung adjacent, its spherical contour recalled the lens of a microscope examining the spectacle. The painted image extended the possible reading of the documentary projected image. It generated a number of possible scenarios such as the wasted aftermath of a celebrity party, indicative of the photojournalism found in *Arena* magazine.



The installation was an attempt to actualise a self-conscious environment, as previously stated, "mindful of its own phenomenological being." Each component reserved its separate identity while simultaneously establishing an aesthetic integrity

for the whole artwork. The discrete components formed a spatial relationship to each other that fostered dialogue within the work and from the audience. The main criticism is that the painted image did not appear specific enough in relation to the political nature of the scene. Although it depicted the site of the fateful event, it did not adequately comment on the political aspect of the event; it appeared vague and therefore compromised. The transcendental experience still eluded my practice.



Garry Doherty *Bin Laden's Bedroom*

In the exhibition seminar the Gallerist Andrew Mummery critiqued the work enquiring: “Why do you have to make contentious images to represent Islamic culture”. I replied, “I was responding to the political moment and my interest centred on the lack of factual information to uphold the spectacle reported by the press.” He conveyed an interest in painting as historical, art that seeks to report outside the boundaries of its own tradition and he encouraged me to continue looking for an original position that can extend the tradition.

Case Study: German Residency. *Art Toll. 3-28.12*



Work in progress Art-toll Residency Germany *The clinic 1:01 – Dedication: To All Those Who Have lived and Died.* 2012

The artist's residency, *Directional Forces*,² (2012) took place in a large psychiatric clinic town, which had the feel of an industrial complex. Every person in the town was either a doctor or mental health patient. The studio was situated in an old mental hospital building surrounded by a number of secure units for the 'criminally insane'. Yet all this was shielded by a landscape of trees reminiscent of Friedrich's paintings, behind which emanated the pain of the inhabitants of the secure wards. Another dimension of this mental health complex was the history of the Nazi atrocities against the mentally ill. Outside the studio was a shrine with a plaque commemorating those who were killed.

Suddenly, from conceptualising the fear and terror of the sublime, I was experiencing it directly. I began painting with a feeling of being very disconcerted; outside the window was the view that confronted all my fears pertaining to the sensitive and fragile nature of the mind. I struggled during the first week, making paintings that did not directly reference the place and my experience of it.

One evening I meditated throughout the night and was inspired by a vision of a tree inhabiting the studio space. The next morning, I walked around the grounds and saw a number of felled trees. Responding impetuously, I cut down the damaged pine tree (8m long) and carried it up to the studio, fixing it to the ceiling behind the plastic membrane and illuminating it with the blue light of a projector.

It acquired the appearance of a romantic landscape by Caspar David Friedrich but one incarcerated behind the plastic membrane, evocative of a police forensic incident broadcast on a newsflash. The representation referred to the history of German Romanticism, but also the site of the institution, its veils of trees concealing its pain; the forest where the Nazi murdered innocent patients' in 1943. My response in building the installation was to portray the beauty of solemnity in a silent dedication: *To all those who have lived and died.*

² *Directional Forces 2012* brings together 16 artists from Malaysia, Taiwan, Europe and the UK to work in residency at Artoll, a specialist arts studio complex situated in a rural psychiatric clinic town near to Kleve in Germany. The aim of the *Directional Forces 2012* is for the artists to interrogate the pedagogy of their practice within a social situation within a series of interconnected studios, leading towards a new body of work by each artist. None of the studio spaces have separating doors, and artists are free to observe and comment on the practices of each other, without privacy. The artists live, eat and work together, sharing knowledge, ideas and creative experiences through social interaction and engagement. This is an unfamiliar situation for the majority of artists, who typically work in isolated studio spaces in cities. (Roberts, H. (2012) *Directional Forces*. <http://directionalforces2012.tumblr.com> p.1. (Accessed 20 June 2012).



Installation at Art-Toll , Germany. *The clinic 1:01 – Dedication: To All Those Who Have lived and Died.* 2012

I photographed the fluctuating light conditions and commenced painting directly from the installation. In the course of painting I started to relate to the action and feeling of the soft nylon brush stroking the smooth silky ground of the gesso panel. The painted veneer stretched across the plane of the panel as if it were a reflective sheet of glass. The painting transmitted a sensation of quiet gentle tenderness, which permitted the painting to extend the content of the installation. As a result of the place and its effect on me, I finally discovered the emotional state I was seeking as content beyond the image, but communicated through the plastic nature of paint.



Garry Doherty Installation at Art Toll Germany *The clinic 1:01* – 2012

I had been questioning the relevance of the paintings in relation to the installations. Previously, the paintings did not adequately supply the emotive content because I was lost in the complexity of constructing an image. Painting now had a structural relevance within the installation, adding content that could only be experienced through paint. I came to understand the importance of paintings as documents, either proposals for the building of an installation or a record of it.



Garry Doherty *The Clinic* oil/panel 2012

The construction of the wooden panels for the paintings therefore became increasingly important, their forty-five degree edge emphasises the picture plane and creates an appearance of speed in the image as it approaches the boundary of the panel's parameter. To contain the image, definition was needed to stop the temporal world from entering the space of its painted universe. I experimented with a number of solutions, such as gluing a frame onto its surface, but I finally decided on the simple action of sanding through the gesso to define the edge of the panel and exposing the wood to make an integral frame. The exposed wood absorbed the paint differently and formed a natural delineated frame.



Garry Doherty *The Clinic Dedication: To all those who have lived and died*. Work in progress –Artist in residence Germany

For the exhibition opening I hung three paintings each on its own wall in proximity to the large installation. The paintings coalesce the diverse sociological and historical readings found in the installation and codify their interpretation into sensory meaning, characterised by a quiet tenderness. A number of the visiting German audience responded immediately to the historical quotation from their cultural heritage and acknowledged the installations sensitivity to the Clinic and its recent history.³ They endorsed the attempt to explode the manufacture of the romantic construct and reacted positively to the emotive disposition of the paintings, citing the intrinsic tenderness. I was pleased with their feedback. It endorsed my intention to expose an illusory construct and simultaneously transmit an essential truth referring to the silence of time. Another guest made an analogy to Beuys's *Needles of a Christmas tree* (1962) which he left standing for four years in his studio as a reminder of death. Each needle of the tree is the tangible accumulation of time and the endurance of life in death. The tree is an invitation to cleanse the wounds of Germany's socio-politic history by a declaration of ritual display. Beuys pantomimed Germany's wounds to cause catharsis in its consciousness, the emphatic statement optimistically designed as the catalyst to cure its spiritual being. My own installation called for a similar comparative and cathartic response by portraying the beauty of solemnity in the silent dedication:

To all those who have lived and died

³Patients from the clinic were murdered in the forest by the Nazi regime during the Second World War. There is a memorial to the victims near the studio.



Joseph Beuys *The needles of a Christmas Tree* 1962

FOURTH YEAR THEORY: *Transcendent Narratives*

The third year's research had focused on the function of narrative, paying attention to 'transcendent narratives' and their ability to frame and reference the context for my research. During the fourth year the theoretical investigation continued, examining writers, artists and theorists who explore a transcendent engagement: I Concentrated on two lines of enquiry: the place of transcendence and the process of recording the transcendental experience. I researched Stanley Spencer and the discovery of the spiritual in the everyday and Caspar-David Friedrich and his relationship to the Romantic Sublime Tradition.

My study began by directing the enquiry to artists who employ authentic expressions of the spiritual in the everyday. The depictions of these ritual experiences appear as if simple extensions conveying thoughts and feelings of their daily life. The first that came to mind was Stanley Spencer who portrayed the everyday events of village life in Cookham transported to a heavenly paradise. His visionary spectacle transformed the everyday, into scenes of spiritual significance.



The churchyard – Cookham village

During the Great War, Spencer served as a medical orderly and witnessed the horrors of the injured and dying on the battlefield. The war years disorientated him and when he returned he found he was no longer able to create paintings in the same manner. 'The war changed me, he admitted. I no longer have that assurance and feeling of security I had before' (Phelen, 2001, p.3). The statement is reminiscent of the feeling of unease and insecurity that I experienced in Germany and resulted in a new combination of emotional power and sensitivity in the paintings.

In the unorthodox spiritual vision exemplified in *The Resurrection*, completed in 1927, Spencer's loss of innocence is compensated by gains in experience emerging in

the profound vision of an everyday scene of a community absolved by love and death, the theme of *The Resurrection*. The terror of war that pervaded his vision sought a release and found it in the beauty and common comfort of provincial village life, its daily customs a grand religious ceremony towards a reconfigured place of peace. In contrast, I felt I was also aiming for a ‘reconfigured place of peace’, but sought it through a place of horror.



Stanley Spencer *The Resurrection Cookham* 1927

In his painting, Spencer depicts the entire population of Cookham emerging from their graves and resurrected to the sunny domain of the absolute. This is a resurrection without a last judgment. It becomes apparent all of Cookham is to be forgiven their sin. Spencer produced this most challenging work in the struggle to reconcile insight as stated, ‘*the work was the means to ‘recover’ my lost soul*’ (Glew, 2001,p.120).

With life and nature---purifying thus

The elements of feeling and of thoughts

And sanctifying, by such discipline,

Both pain and fear, until we recognise

A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

The Prelude (1805) (Wordsworth, 1984, p.16).

William Wordsworth was equally tormented by the possibility of expulsion from his celestial vision. In Wordsworth's *Prelude* a spiritual epic that concerns itself with the growth and development of the human consciousness. He asserts that modern man, when alienated from nature, loses his true moral centre. He tries to convince us that it is only through direct contact with nature that we can purify our feelings and thoughts and sanctify our being. The ferment of nature inflicts the fear and pain of purification, transforming ideas of the self and restoring the moral core to the heart of the human being. This is an attitude shared by Caspar David Friedrich, the German Romantic painter whose work personifies nature's correspondence to the mind and the world of ideas that configure its comprehension.



C.D.Friedrich *The Chasseur in the forest* 1814



C.D.Friedrich *Winter landscape with church* 1811

Friedrich's imagery frequently depicts lone travellers seeking refuge in the silent space of nature. Their solace bears witness to Friedrich's belief in God's immanence permeating every aspect of nature. He gives the natural world a deeper spiritual significance recognising the simple fir grove as a temple, the altar signified by clearing in the wood. The paintings serve as models to test Christian faith and imagery against the primordial power of nature and an older pantheist belief system. Friedrich's heightened sensitivity to his natural environment permitted an intuitive response to nature's indeterminate power and its appetite to consume all traces of human culture and its relevance.



C.D. Friedrich *Abbey in Oakwood* 1809



Viewing C.D.Friedrich *Abbey in Oakwood*

Furthermore Friedrich visualizes the wandering lone figure becalmed by the immensity of nature at the axis of the viewer's conception. This axis maps the meeting point from depiction to the world of real experience. Its geography imparts the converging sensation between belonging and estrangement, longing and loss. The paintings pose the question "why do we face nature's immensity with solemnity." Human beings seek these answers in experiences that reach beyond imagination; whether it is the awe of a skyscraper or the immensity of a landscape. The experience intuitively informs of a boundless universe beyond our conception. Its wonderment overpowers and conquers our sense of control. Subjugated by our feelings of humility and trepidation we acknowledge the boundary of comprehension and limits of acumen, as Burke states, 'obscurity in general seems to be necessary' (Burke, 1987, p.58). The passions and terror often associated within his rhetoric of the sublime are awakened in dark, indeterminate spaces in which the immense, the immeasurable and the obscure are all chief attributes. 'For when we can see an object distinctly we can perceive its bound' (Burke, 1987, p.60). Our sense of what is obscure, such as the immensity of nature, ideas of death and God, release within our depths a terrifying sensory space that recognises the unknown in death. He continues, 'To mark the limits of empirical understanding; one cannot for example, properly experience heaven or hell, yet the ideas of such states exert profound influence on our understanding of ourselves and the world we inhabit. For this reason 'Ignorance' is crucial component of the sublime.....The ideas of eternity and infinity are nothing of which we really understand' (Burke, 1987, p.60).



C.D. Friedrich *The Monk by the Sea* 1808

The feeling of apprehension evoked by Friedrich's painting, is also a sense of 'sadness' associated with restriction and suggestive of being 'locked out' or refused access to the place of wonder. The encounter is one of loss, as the viewer is barred entry to the spectacle. The feeling of longing and bereavement identified by the monk is the sentiments shared by the viewer. Both are barred access: the monk from communion with the absolute and contained by reason, the spectator, from true experience of the landscape, only to be left with its representation.

Joseph-Leo Koerner conveys further insight: 'Friedrich locates sublimity not in the object itself, but in its subjective effect on the viewer. The distant mountains and forests are thus not in themselves sublime. It is their obscurity, their presence and absence as objects of the viewer's gaze that endows them with their power.' (Koerner, 1990, p.181).

It was Emanuel Kant whose detailed analysis questions the perceived sublimity of the spectacle and instead locate its phenomena in the comprehension of the beholder. Sublimity is contained not in any thing of nature, but only in our mind, insofar as we can become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and thereby also to nature outside us....sublimity can be attributed to our way of thinking' (Kant, 1964, p,114). In his classic text *Critique of Judgment*, he acknowledges the transcendental

conditions that lie beneath conceptual discernment. ‘The feeling of the sublime is a feeling of displeasure from the imagination’s inadequacy, in an aesthetic estimation of magnitude, for an estimation of reason, but it is at the same time pleasure, aroused by the facts that this very judgment of the inadequacy, namely, that even the greatest power of sensibility is inadequate, itself in harmony with rational ideas, insofar as striving toward them is still a law for us’ (Kant, 1964, p.106).

According to Kant the sublime experience induces ‘displeasure’ due to the inability of the imagination to comprehend nature in its totality. Nonetheless ‘pleasure’ is sought by its very failure, for it is in failure that ‘totality’ is perceived and forms a ‘rational idea.’ The fact that we are able to conceive the infinite as a whole and extend beyond the boundaries of empirical cognition demonstrate that we are beings who possess the capacity to transcend the phenomena of our concrete actuality. Wordsworth, like Kant, envisages the capacity for the imagination to create the feeling of access in the self that has the ability to annihilate the normal senses and animate the visionary forces that can extend beyond consciousness of self.



C.D. Friedrich *Two men looking at the moon* 1819

*The perfect image of the mighty mind,
Of one that feeds on infinity.
That is exalted by an under-presence,
The sense of God, or whatso'er is dim
Or vast in its own being.....*

The Prelude (1805) (Wordsworth, 1984, p.230).

In Wordsworth's 'Prelude' he succeeds in meditating upon the limits of language in order to transcend beyond it but in recognition that no single image can encapsulate the 'vastness of being'. He is continually aware that when language captures the imagination it ceases to be.

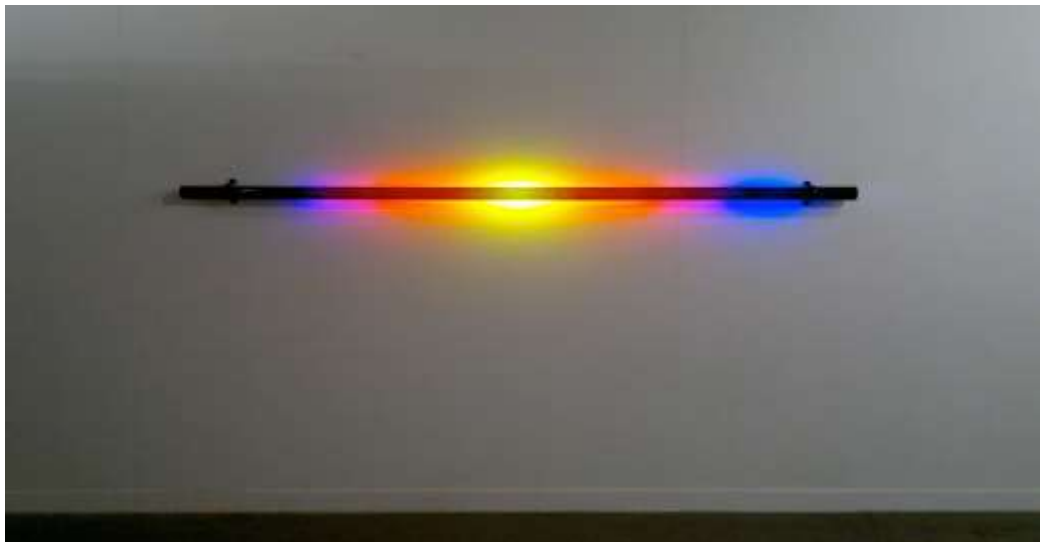


Mariele Neudecker *Things can change in a day* 2001

The dialogue between artifice and transcendence is central to a number of contemporary artists who continue Friedrich's and Wordsworth's concerns and explore the sublime now. One such artist is Mariel Neudecker who stages the sublime in sculptural models. Her work miniaturises the effects of the sublime, capturing its immensity in order to scrutinise its properties. In viewing we become responsive to the historical representation of the sublime and cognisant of our perception and its relation to imagination and memory.

The enquiry focuses on the cultural phenomena of the Sublime Tradition and presents a deconstructed model of the transcendent. Like Wordsworth and Friedrich, Neudecker investigates the space between the logic of language and its persuasive ability to extend the limits of representation, thus addressing the mediated experience of the transcendent encounter.

Reminiscent of Neudecker's sculptures my own work increasingly emphasised the dialogue between artifice and a modern vision of the sublime. The light sculpture *Munich Sunrise* returns to a minimal aesthetic that is used to evoke the title's time and place of the seventies. It combines both image and form effectively and projects an illuminated cast of coloured light that suggests the radiance of a romantic sunrise or conversely the blast of a bomb. The representation signifies the terror of the title but is contained by its factual nature. The sculpture declares its construction and heightens the viewer's awareness of the artwork as model. The power of the signifier prevents the artwork from inhabiting the terror of the subject; instead a passive contemplation is induced in the viewer and the sublime recedes to the commodification of a mere sign.



G. Doherty *Munich12:47* Light installation 2012 (200x 10cm) Arch Gallery London.

In the past year (2012-13) I have increasingly considered my creative practice as a series of models that mediate reality. The models exist in a range of sizes and inhabit diverse set of forms: such as the Ethiopian Riad house is a model to negotiate an ideal living space (under construction), installations refers to sublime landscapes (*The Clinic*), sculptures/video installations present the terror of the sublime (*Car Bomb*, *Munich*), small models and paintings document the staging of the sublime.



Garry Doherty: *Munich*, video Installation. *The Riad House*, Ethiopia.

The Clinic Installation Germany.

Since the beginning of human development, architects and artists have been building models. The Egyptians filled their tombs with small-scale replicas of boats, butcher shops, gardens; the model represented the individual's desire or needs that required support and status in the afterlife. These models were also believed to have magical qualities that could direct and aid the journey into death. Throughout history the model has been an instrument to define our world. The architectural theorist Albert C. Smith states, 'The scale model is a mechanism for creating definition, mediating between chaos and human design. Positioned in the marginal area between lifelessness and the uncanny, the visible and the invisible' (Smith, 2004, p.xvi).



Egyptian Middle Period *Model of boat*

Egyptian Middle Period *Model Grana*

In the last forty years the model has become the agency to redefine the stability of space, time and its relation to the object. Many artists have questioned the object and its static nature, as Olafur Eliasson cites in *Models are Real*, 'The idea of object hood has, in part, been substituted with performative strategies, the notion of ephemerality, of negotiation and change...that acknowledges the fundamental connection and interplay between space and time and ourselves' (Olafur Eliasson, 2013). Contemporary artists like the Egyptians are creating objects/models to define the complexity of our transient environment in order to define it.

In my own artistic practice I began to perceive the artworks as models of engagement used to reflect on and contemplate a historical moment or an idea. The models

became experiments to rethink and try to reform a condition and create a new paradigm. The artworks comprehend the world as a collection of models and not static truths, models that can be potentially transformed, making it possible to ameliorate our socio-political surroundings.

In *Car Bomb* I attempted to convey the beauty and peace in the aftermath of a car bomb, which I perceived as being sublime. The work addressed the violence and terror of a terrorist action and a media audience seduced to compulsively watch as the awe of the sublime event unfolded. Burkes words inspired the experiment, ‘Passion caused by the great and the sublime in nature...astonishment is the state of the soul, in which all motions are suspended, with some degree of horror’ (Burke, 19987, p.173).



Garry Doherty "Car Bomb" -1 Installation Event, China Town London 10.02.13

Car Bomb was installed crashed into a column in a car park. The car interior is illuminated with fluorescent light and a smoke machine provides the atmosphere of the aftermath of a bomb. The work continually evokes the time when the dust is settling before the full horror is realised. The moment is extended, providing a space the viewers to inhabit its momentary station while the viewer considers their part in the narrative of the sublime. The sculpture is not a representation but an actor in the real and the scene confuses the audience by its authenticity. Its nearness to the real opens up the uncanny and psychic fears are unleashed, ‘the uncanny is something

which is secretly familiar, which has undergone repression and then returned from it. Everything that is uncanny fulfils this condition' (Freud, 1997, p.222). Uncanny feelings arise when the familiar becomes unknown, the everydayness of the car forces the viewers imagination to examine death – 'Death and the re-animation of the dead are typically represented as uncanny themes (Freud, 1997, p.223). Wordsworth, like Freud, understood death as a sublime theme capable of opening up the powers of the uncanny imagination. In the *Prelude* he acknowledged the awful power of the imagination compelled towards the apocalyptic, and its capacity for excess which threatens to extinguish our very consciousness.

*Imagination...like an unfathered vapor; here that power,
In all the might of its endowments, came
Athward me; I was lost in a cloud,
Halted, without struggle to break through.
And now recovering, to my soul
I say I recognize the glory. In such
Of awful promise, when the light of sense
Goes out in flashes that have been shewn to us The
invisible world, does greatness make abode.*

The Prelude (1805) (Wordsworth, 1984, p.86).

Wordsworth clarifies the dangers of coming too close to the sublime as a fatal sacrifice. In staging the threat of the sublime imagination, Wordsworth contrives a method of protecting the self from the dangers of its annihilation within its presence. The imagination is domesticated by its reflection and Wordsworth initiates a recovery “ And now recovering, to my soul I say I recognize the glory.” The poet’s self-consciousness moves towards reconciliation, which supports the mind and seeks to heal the rupture between sign and meaning. His *Prelude* reflects on the limits of language in order to move beyond its boundaries.

Reminiscent of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, the installation *Car Bomb*, confronts the viewer with the violence and terror of the sublime. The work unleashes the power of the imagination to contemplate total destruction, its supremacy the agent and catalyst to reconcile its trauma. The intention of the work was to provide a model for resolution, restoring the mind by means of a *homeopathic processes* (Ray, 2001, p.176) the remedy, confronting terror with terror itself. It moves the mind away from the power and totality of awe, towards the beautiful and the compelling conception of harmony and order; an order that remembers past and potential future transgressions.

Within Islam, mourning sin is mans redemptive power towards a greater consciousness, through remembrance has the possibility of transcending the trauma of humanity. Both fear and beauty are aspects of Divine order and award form to the ineffable and apprehension to the individual. The sublime imagination makes it possible to conceive the infinite within the finite as Kant's proposition acknowledges, 'The feeling of the sublime... is in an aesthetic estimation of magnitude, for an estimation of reason' (Kant, 2004, p.63). *Car Bomb* is an attempt to ameliorate trauma through the service of beauty. It corresponds to Beuys's declaration scrawled onto blackboards, *show your wounds* (1977). Like Beuys, I am trying to develop artworks that heal society's rupture through commemoration, confronting loss with remembrance.

During the Doctorate the intensity of my academic research has gradually become integrated with the creative practice shaping its engagement within the sublime tradition. I have attempted to bring all the constituent parts of my life's experiences together to engender an active spiritual service. Although I appreciate that transcendence is in the discernment of the beholder, I hope it can be acknowledged within my artwork. The fact that we are able to conceive the infinite, demonstrates that we are beings who possess the capacity to transcend the phenomena of our concrete actuality.



G.Doherty Munich Video

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Solo Exhibitions

- 2008 Solo exhibition ‘Future Perfect’, Asni Gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Exhibited paintings and drawings from the project.
- 2005 Solo Exhibition – “ Future Perfect” Jose Bokhovan Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland. Collection of paintings and drawings from the project.
- 1989 Artist-in- Residence Show – North East London Gallery, London. Work exhibited from residency.

Joint Exhibitions

- 2012 Directional Forces Exhibition. Art-Toll Residency. Dusseldorf, Germany. Exhibited three paintings and a installation.
- 2012 East To East. Co-curated with H. Roberts and S. Mooney. Exhibition of student work U.E.L
- 2012 Annex Gallery, Kuala Lumpar, Malaysia. Exhibited a textile print and a painting.

- 2012 East to East. Co-curated with H. Roberts and S. Mooney. Exhibition of student work U.E.L
Nadak Gallery, Singapore. Exhibited a textile print and a painting.
- 2011 A.V.A. Gallery, U.E.L. Installation of drawing and video object.
- 2010 Stones of Menace, church, London, curated by Jon Purnell, one day exhibition - event with invited artists, film makers, architects and guest speakers . Installation of large drawing(8x3m). Future Perfect 12:16
- 2010 Professional Doctorate Summer Showcase, A.V.A. Studios, U.E.L. Exhibited five paintings entitled Munich 12:45.
- 2010 Off The Clock. Magnificent Basement Gallery, London. Presented large drawing Future Perfect 12:16.
- 2010 Off The Clock. The Pavilion, Mile End Park. London. Installation of large drawing (6x3m), Future Perfect 12:18.
- 2010 Middlesbrough, presented five paintings entitled Munich12:45.
- 2010 Riseomatic. Unit Twelve, Concord way, London, installation of large three dimensional drawing.
- 2010 Postcards To America, exchange exhibition between New York State University and U.E.L.
- 2010 Professional Doctorate. Work in Progress Exhibition. A.V.A.Galery. U.E.L The first Installation of Drawn films, comprising of drawing, object and video.
- 2010 Unreliable Narrative. Vyner Street Gallery, London. Group show. Installation of drawing object and sound piece.
- 2010 Professional Doctorate Summer Exhibition.
- 2009 Joint Exhibition – ‘Methodologies,’ Doctorate students U.E.L.. , APT gallery, London. Exhibited large drawing 6m x 3m from the project Future Perfect
- 2008 Tomb Design School of Sufi Teaching, New Delhi, India. Co-ordinator for drawings and design working with architects and Islamic designers.
- 2006 Compilation Group show – curated Garry Doherty, AVA Gallery, UEL, London. Exhibited diptych Future Perfect :12:11-12:12
- 2004 Two person Show with R. Fiele, Jose Bokhovan Gallery, Amsterdam, Holland. Exhibited painting Future Perfect 12:03 and sculpture of a dog.
- 2004 Group Show, New Drawing Exhibition – Atrium ,UEL.

- 2003 Group Show – “Response to Conflict”, Atrium Gallery, UEL, London.
Exhibited painting Future Perfect 12:10
- 2002 ACME Open Studios – Copperfield Road, London. Exhibited painting
working progress.
- 2001 ACME Open Studios – Carpenters Road, London.
Exhibited painting Future Perfect 12:00-12:09
- 1991 Group Show – Painting to Photography – photographs Gallery – Central
London. Exhibited small painting “India”
- 1990 Open Studio ACME , Newham London. Exhibited abstract painting
working progress and it was called ‘Distillation.’
- 1986 Group ‘Open Show’ – Castlefield Gallery, Manchester.
Exhibited painting from M.A. Degree Show ‘Founder.’
- 1984 Drawing Show - (1st Prize) ‘Art for All’ Manchester University,
Manchester Exhibited large drawing ‘take me to the river.’

Selected Exhibitions

- 2009 Network of Islamic Artists (NIA) Islamic film makers, Co-ordinator – Day
presentations. St.Ethelberga’s, London.

N.I.A Performance – presentation, – Co-curator. St Ethelberga’s , London.
Organised talk on the use of perfume in Islamic world.

N.I.A Exhibition ‘Made in Britain’ – Co-curator. Asia House, London.
Exhibited large drawing 6m x 3m Project Future Perfect.
- 2008 N.I.A - Film presentation “ Baptism of Christ”St Ethelberga’s,London,Co-
curator. Organiser of talk with the director Mustafa Bueller. N.I.A - Co-
curator, speaker, Art Forum, St Ethelberga’s London. Talk on my work
Future Perfect in relation to Spirituality
- 2008 N.I.A - Panel participant, co-curator “Spirituality & Music” , St
Ethelberga’s , London. Coordinator music evening with Mathew Sanson
and Baluji, Islamic Musicians.
- 2007 Drawing Exhibition – Curated by Mark Hampson for the Drawing
Research group, A.V.A.Gallery. U.E.L. Exhibited small drawings
Future Perfect 12:08.
- 2006 News from Nowhere curated by Mark Hampson, William Morris
Gallery, London. Exhibited large pop-up print 5m x 3m from the Project
Future Perfect.

- 2009 A.P.T Open exhibition, selected Sasha Craddock, APT Gallery, London. Exhibited painting Future Perfect 12:00.
- 1988 Curated 'Open Show' Art East Gallery, London. Exhibited two large abstract paintings 'Woman' and 'Scent.'
- 1986 Curated Group Show – Northern College of Music, Manchester. Exhibited abstract painting from M.A. show.

Teaching Initiatives for Sufism

- 2010 Director of the Sufi Order—School of Sufi Teaching London.
- 2013 Responsible for the purchase of a building for a meditation centre
- 1991-2013 Co-ordinator - and Manager of weekly gatherings, School of Sufi Teaching, London.
- 2011 Completed writing preliminary teachings for new students for School of Sufi Teaching.
- 2010 Co-ordinated Summer Retreat for School of Sufi Teaching, Asitane Hotel, Istanbul.
- 1997-2012 Co-ordinated Easter Retreat for School of Sufi Teaching, Charney Manor Oxford. Presentation 'Sufism and Process'
- 2009-13 Managed monthly night vigils.
- 2008 Talk on "Sufism and Lataif" – Islam Meet Christianity, St Ethelberga's , London.
- 2007 Co-ordinator – Summer Retreat for School of Sufi Teaching, Granada, Spain Presentation 'Sufism in Granada'
- 2000-06 Winter Retreat –Hazrat Azad Rassol Funeral, School of Sufi Teaching, New Delhi, India.
- 2002 Co-ordinator – Summer Retreat , School of Sufi Teaching, St David's , Wales.
- 2000 Inaugurated charitable trust for School of Sufi Teaching, London (Religious Educational trust certified by the charitable commission).

Residencies

- 2012 Directional Forces. Art-Toll residency. Dusseldorf, Germany.

Workshops

- 2006 Utopia workshop Wanstead School “News from Nowhere,” William Morris Gallery, London.
- 1998 Affordable Art Fair, Painting Workshop, London. Exhibited three paintings and a installation.
- 2008 Asni gallery, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Three -week studio residencies and Show.
- 1989 Artist in Residence at North East London Polytechnic.

Curatorial Practice

- 2011 Curated and initiated group exhibition of four Prof Doc students, entitled Unreliable Narrator. Vyner street Gallery, London.
- 2012 EAST TO EAST. CO-curated with H. Roberts and S. Mooney. Exhibition of student work U.E.L
- 2012 Annex Gallery, Kuala Lumpar, Malaysia.
Exhibited a textile print and a painting.
- 2012 East To East. Co-curated with H. Roberts and S. Mooney. Exhibition of student work U.E.L.
- 2012 Nadak Gallery, Singapore. Exhibited a textile print and a painting.
Founder Member of NIA (Network of Islamic Artists) Forum to research relationship between spirituality and art practice.

Publications

- 2012 Directional Forces. Catalogue Art-Toll Publication.
- 2012 Science of Nature, Catalogue. Art-Toll Publication.
- 2010 Invited to participate in round table discussion on the theme of artists who have worked for other well -known artists. Off The Clock, Resonance F.M.London.

- 2010 Invited to participate in a video interview about creative practice. Presented at Muslim Council of Britain annual Leadership dinner, Millennium Hotel London.
- 2010 Dedication to Hazrat Azad Rasool. Fonz vita. Invited to contribute 10 page memorial for dedication to Shaykhs life
- 2009 Fundraiser for book on Shaykh Hazrat Khan written by Hazrat Azad Rasool. Published by Fonz Vita.
- 2008 Interview with Aisha Masterton "Sufism and Modernity"- Iranian Television, London.
- 2007 Interview with Mark Hampson "Future Perfect". Invited visual contribution to "News from Nowhere", edited by Mark Hampson, published at Royal College Of Art.

Conferences

- 2007 Invited to represent Manera Foundation at conference "Restoration of Harar." Funded by the World Bank, U.N.E.S.C.O. and the Ethiopian Government.

Architecture

- 2010 Continue building and redesigning Riad in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Two years ago started building a three hundred square meter Riad house in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. One third of the building has been completed and presently the first floor is being redesigned, owing to extensive building by neighbours, which affects the light conditions. A new plan has been designed and I hope to start on this aspect of the project in July 2013.

Membership of Professional Organisations

- 2008-2011 Member of 'Drawing Research Group' AVA , UEL, London
- 2008 Founder member of N.I.A. Net work of Islamic Artists. Forum to discuss Art and Spirituality, London.
- 2008 Invited on the board of Manera, charitable Foundation, dedicated to the restoration of the Islamic
- 2000 Director of School of Sufi Teaching Charitable Foundation inaugurated with Charity Commission, London.
- 1994 Manager and representative for the U.K. –School of Sufi Teaching.
- 1988 Founder member of Art East Collective London. Democratically organized group of artists exhibiting and organising spaces for exhibitions.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

“The Doctorial study will transform the assessment of yourself and change the perception of how you are perceived by your colleagues.”

Shaykh Hazrat Azad Rasool

In 2006 shortly before he died, my Shaykh advised me to fulfil my academic potential in order to address personal insecurities. He thought the intellectual rigour of a Doctorate would enhance my confidence in professional life and when representing the Sufi Order. The Shaykh recommended that strong representation was important for ideas and knowledge to be disseminated effectively.

Participation in the Professional Doctorate Programme has renewed every aspect of my practice. The critique experienced in a critical community of creative researchers has provided the reflective space I needed to engender change. It has been directly responsible for transforming the perception of who I am and what I represent. The experience has created a confidence within myself to assert a range of successful professional outcomes during the period of the Doctorate programme.

In the first year Doctorate proposal I stated a number of incongruent directives motivating my professional practice, for example, the desire to build a commercial art practice exhibiting in private and public galleries; to initiate curatorial projects working with other artists and galleries, to develop and implement educational initiatives in universities and the charity, *The School of Sufi Teaching*. The diverse ambitions affected cohesive vision of the ‘artist’ and thus obscure the objective; to develop a unique selling point in order to create a distinctive position in the market.

Forums

In the first year I instigated a number of seminar based forums, commencing with the interfaith forums for the Network of Islamic Artists at Saint Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, London.



St. Ethelburga's Centre - bombed by the IRA in 1992 and is now dedicated to peace and reconciliation.

The forums examined the relationship shared by art practice and spirituality. The dialogue focused on the paradox at the core of the encounter: the strained but creative exchange between the affirmation of the artist ego and the harnessing of the ego within a spiritual practice. The forums were accompanied by live performances or displays of artworks to demonstrate the creative discourse within the individual. The events were marketed effectively, resulting in capacity attendances and published on Saint Ethelberg's website for interfaith dialogue.

These events encouraged me to further experiment with the format of the forum. At the A.P.T. Gallery (2009) I curated an exhibition of Professional Doctorate students work entitled, *Thinking Hand*. The title referred to a book by Richard Sennett in which he explores artist's methodologies in the age of digital media. The exhibition was accompanied by an introductory talk by Karen Raney on 'Methodologies of the Artist' and followed a discussion on methodologies in contemporary practice. The forum was presented in front of an audience at the A.P.T. Gallery and documented on video for publication within UEL.

I recognised an opportunity to widen the discourse and inaugurate a forum entitled *Out of Bounds*, to concur with the Doctorate *Summer Showcase*. The project was supported by the Dean of School and received research funding to facilitate the attendance of specialist art professionals to critique the exhibition. The invited guests were Paul Hedge, Director of Hales Gallery, Gina Baumfeld, Director of Alison Jacques Gallery, the writer Martin Holeman and Jason Bowman, curator and artist.

The guests were asked to view the work from their own professional and commercial position. Their insights were fresh and untouched by academia, although some students found their commercial viewpoint contentious. I thought it was a successful

experience and sought to replicate the forum in future Summer Showcases, until it was finally amalgamated into the official programme of the Doctorate.



City of Harra, Ethiopia.



Rimbaud's House Harra.

The first year established a number of other significant outcomes for the professional practice, a noteworthy examples is the invitation to represent the Menara Foundation at *The Restoration Of Harra* Conference in Ethiopia. The conference was funded by the World Bank and supported by U.N.E.S.C.O. and the Ethiopian Government. Its remit was to provide a vision and plan for the restoration of the ancient 'Walled City.' I presented a talk on the prestigious site of Rimbaud's House. The talk was aimed at future investors to assist in the restitution of the building. Limited funds were successfully acquired from the Turkish Government and the restoration continues today.

After completing the Doctorate, I intend to extend an invitation to Doctorate students from other Universities to share their practice culminating in publicised forums and possible conferences. In March 2013, I have been invited to present a lecture on my work and Doctorate research to Ph.D students at Newcastle University. I have begun communicating with the Programme leader, Professor Wolfgang, and am presently in discussions on future joint projects such as forums and residencies.

The success of the first year was to utilise and develop intrinsic skills, such as co-ordinating forums and initiating events within an academic context. These skills had been dormant until the Doctorate created the intellectual space to permit their expression. The seminar presentations encouraged in me an intellectual engagement that has excited and endorsed a new self-confidence in pursuing professional projects.

Exhibition Projects

At the beginning of the Second (2009-10) year I made a plan of action, determined to engage the creative practice in a more assertive and professional manner. I wished to test the assertion that the display of the work was the central point of critical interest. In seeking greater visibility, I decided to exhibit the work in a diverse choice of exhibition spaces. To achieve this result I was proactive in developing contacts with curators and gallerists.



Off The Clock. The Magnificent Basement Gallery, London.

In the summer (2010) a young curator Iavor Lubomirov extended an invitation to show work in a exhibition entitled *Off The Clock*. The curatorial concerns of the exhibition were to initiate debate, exploring the relationship between artists who have assisted senior successful artists. The content of the exhibition addressed my own professional history (working for Anthony Caro).

In a radio interview on Resonance FM, a number of questions were asked concerning, “how assisting the principle artist had influenced ones own practice”. I answered, “Tony Caro taught me to understand the internal dynamic of a sculpture in relation to its environmental context.”

It became apparent this critical point of formal understanding was intuitively drawn upon within my present creative ambitions and acknowledged in the work presented. At the end of the project a sense of closure prevailed, initiating a new independence from a once influential work experience.

In the third year (2010-11), I exhibited a large drawing entitled *Future Perfect 12:16*. (7x3m) for the exhibition entitled *Stones of Menace*. The exhibition addresses the

austere architecture of Brutalism, often vilified for producing social neglect rather than the vibrant community life envisioned by its architects. It explores polemical perspectives on art and architecture and opens up the debate on the role of culture as a source of conflict and criticism.

At the *Vyner Street Gallery*, I curated and presented work of fellow Professional Doctorate students. The exhibition entitled, *The Unreliable Narrator* explored the role of artifice in narration. The exhibition achieved a lot of attention and four hundred people attended the opening. The exhibition created a dialogue between the Doctorate students who participated, the intimacy and trust gained within the group extended beyond the event and continues today.

In the fourth year (2011-12) I intentionally engaged the professional practice in a more assertive and proficient manner, which resulted in fifteen exhibitions in that year. Although I was pleased with the successful outcomes I recognised it hindered the creative processes. This realisation informed a reassessment, leading to an emphasis on the creative development of the practice in sight of the final year exhibition.

The most significant exhibition while on the Doctorate took place during the fourth year (2011-12) at the Art-Toll Residency, Germany. I was able to bring all the constituent parts of the practice together into an installation entitled *The Clinic*. A large illuminated tree installed in a studio/gallery addressed the Sublime Tradition and the context of the mental health institute. The work established a clearer and faster method of working, the honed efficiency enabling a greater number of works to be manufactured in the future and therefore the possibility of exhibiting more.



Garry Doherty *The Clinic*, Art-Toll Residency Germany. 2011

Two German curators commented favourably on the installation and asked for further documentation. The Director of Art-toll responded positively to the installation and was impressed by its relationship to nature and invited me to be a British representative in an international Summer Residency entitled *The Science of Nature* (2013).



Garry Doherty *Car Bomb* Installation for the Chinese Open London.

In the fifth year (2013) I was invited to participate in an installation event *Minus One* for the Chinese New Year. I decided to install a sculpture entitled, *Car Bomb*. I positioned a car as if it had crashed in a car park and illuminated the interior with powerful lights and smoke in an attempt to address the fear and awe of the sublime. The work received a lot of attention during the show and significant interest on social media sites.



East to East exhibition Nan Yang Gallery Singapore

Curation Projects

Hedley Roberts, a fellow doctorate student and programme leader for DAVC, invited my participation as a co-curator for an exhibition entitled *East to East*. The exhibition installed at the *Annex Gallery* Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and travelled onto the Nan Yang Gallery, Singapore. The exhibition represented student work from all subject

arrears of A.D.I. including Doctorate students and I displayed the painting *Future Perfect 12:12* and a textile print.

Teaching Initiatives

During 2010, I was invited to contribute to new teaching initiatives; in February the programme leader for Graphic Design, Pete Nevin requested a contribution to the *Exhibition, Presentation and Production* module. I gave a one day workshop in the gallery on curation, comparing the design of an exhibition with the graphic page. The students produced an interactive digital video projection that responded to touch sensors on the page, resulting in a graphic encounter. In April, I accompanied the students to mount the book and video installation at the *Baux Arts* Valance, France.

Participation in the Doctorate was directly responsible for transforming my position within the University, it allowed me to transcend my role of Technical Demonstrator and instead be acknowledged as an academic. Without the structure of the Doctorate, I would not have been able to overcome the glass ceiling that exists within the University. In 2010, I ascertained a part-time teaching post as first year Lecturer in Illustration, working alongside Martin Barrett a fellow Doctorate student. Martin mentored my teaching experience and steered the path through pedagogic processes. I contributed to the design of the module guide and assisted in the writing of project briefs.



U.E.L. Graphic Design Students *Art of the book*, Baux Arts Valance, France.

Teaching Workshops

In a workshop entitled *Strike*, a film by Eisenstein was slowed down to one frame a second and projected onto white plinths, deconstructing the film and emphasizing its duration. The students were asked to respond to the transience of a fleeting image and construct a filmic drawing about time, replicating the cyclical nature of the film.



Drawing workshop Strike

Indicative of this multi media approach I designed a number of drawing workshops entitled *Projection with model*. They presented a model posing in front of a back screen projection of a painting. The students sat both sides of the projection and drew from the index of multiple representations, analysing their illustrations.



Life class drawing class Projection with model

Since 2010, I have been responsible for curating the annual Illustration exhibition in the A.V.A Gallery. It was a new departure for illustration students to publicly displayed work to the whole student body. In the latest exhibition (2012) the students exhibited two hundred and fifty graphic novels in the gallery, their involvement in the curatorial process created new learning experiences providing further possibilities for experimental approaches to image-making. Subsequently the event resulted in a student self-published fanzine, which further demonstrates the knowledge gained from the *Graphic Novel* exhibition. The response from their peer group in other subject areas was very positive. The exhibition expanded the visibility of the illustration module within the A.D.I. Department and enhanced the confidence of staff and students. The module has been proposed to become a full-time course with an intended start date of 2013-14.



1st year Illustration exhibition, A.V.A. Gallery 2010

At the beginning of the academic year 2011, I was given an opportunity to work for D.A.V.C. Teaching in Illustration and Graphic Design. I contribute in the delivery of three separate modules; assisting Hedley Roberts and Tim Foster in *Exhibition, Presentation and Production* and *New Horizons*. Working with Hedley widened my experience of teaching as he uses methods I had not encountered before. He creates a space for learning in which the students are self-directed, rather than information being delivered entirely by the teacher. It is a very stimulating and a dynamic method but I found I was learning along with the students and was on a steep learning curve. The students worked on a number of impressive projects, but the most interesting and challenging was a campaign project for social change. The students were asked to find a community in need and to design a campaign to assist in solving its requirements. The campaign's success was monitored by testimonials collected at the end of the project.

Sufi Teaching Initiatives: School of Sufi Teaching

Due to the experience on the Doctorate I have come to understand the importance of a methodology and have begun to apply its knowledge to teaching initiatives for new initiates for the School of Sufi Teaching. Influenced by the experience of preparing briefs for Illustration, I applied the knowledge to teaching spiritual workshops. I decided to instigate a new structured approach to metaphysical religious rituals that

can sometimes appear ephemeral due to their phenomenal experience. I wrote a programme entitled, *Preliminary Lessons*, for new initiates. The content concentrates on mapping the meditation experience, allowing the student to comprehend their position in the unfolding of the spiritual journey. The feedback from the new strategies for teaching has been positive. The clarity emerging in the teaching processes is being emulated in the new structured approach to managing the charity. The Order in London is has increased significantly, therefore I have created a number of small working groups to manage projects. The new emerging management structure is involving a wider group of students who are adding greater energy to the workings of the Order. The confidence my Shaykh wished me to imbue is now reaping reward, resulting in an evolving professionalised organisation that is attempting to establish the true representation of Islamic values for a western community. In 2013, I received a large donation (£750,000) from a fundraising drive and our new investor is supporting the charity to buy a building to create a Sufi Zawia (meditation centre). I hope to purchase a property within the next four months. I continue to direct weekly meetings and co-ordinate British and International Retreats.

Publications

I have contributed to a number of audio and video publications online. I was invited to take part in a round table discussion on the topic of authorship in art for Resonance FM and broadcasted live and later added to their website.

The Islamic television company Ahlulbayat requested an interview with the presenter Aisha Marston. The discussion focused on the relationship between my creative and spiritual practice and presented as part of their ongoing art program.

The Muslim Council of Great Britain conducted an interview with me entitled, Art and Spirituality. The video was screened at the annual leadership dinner as one of the examples of British Muslims active in the community at The Millennium Hotel. The video has now been published on the MCB website.

Architecture: Addis Ababa Ethiopia



In 2008 I purchased a three hundred and fifty square metre site in Addis Ababa and began building a traditional Islamic ‘Riad’ House focused around an Islamic courtyard. During a Doctorate review, the architect Rene To be asked if I had considered the house as part of a larger art project. The comment readdressed the idea of the domestic house as an art work. I intend to install frescos and sculptural installations into the rooms, inspired by historical documents of gardens of paradise that no longer exist. When the construction is finished I propose to dedicate the building for retreats and art residencies.

CONCLUSION

Show Your Wounds Joseph Beuys scribbled on a blackboard (1977)

In conclusion, the report identifies the Sublime as a tradition my creative practice is intrinsically drawn towards and supported by critical reading in Burke, and the Romantic Tradition. key concepts are: Burke notion of the sublime as being; ‘the cause of the strongest emotion that an individual is capable of feeling’ (Burke, 1987, p.39). Therefore the Sublime maybe defined as pain, fear or terror. Burke traces the source of the sublime to ‘whatever is in any way terrible...or operates in a manner analogous to terror’ (Burke, 1987, p.39). In addition to his emphasis on terror, Burke examines the psychological experience of beauty and pain and develops a theory of aesthetic opposition, in which beauty is derived from pleasure and sublimity from pain. The paradox at the heart of his enquiry, which articulates my own perspective, formed the foundation of my own discourse through out the doctoral programme.

My studio practice raises a hypothetical question *what does a transcendent object look like*. After a series of divergent experiments, the investigation slowly uncovered a psychological need that requires an *active spiritual engagement*, which attempts to redeem terror and trauma from socio-political themes involving Muslim communities mediated to a western audience, such as the 7/7 London bombings (2005). This developing subject matter represented my own cultural perspective and slowly unearthed a deeper unconscious psychological driver, a consequence of a traumatic separation experienced as a child – a sense of loss. As Freud affirms; ‘The work of mourning entails a kind of hyper remembering, a process of obsessive recollection... replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence. This magical restoration of the lost object enables the mourner to assess the value of the relationship and comprehend what he or she has lost in losing the other’ (Clewell, 2002, p.44)

The choice of historical subjects addressed my present position as a British Muslim, but the driver steering the course and consequently its choices is – ‘the sense of absence replaced with an imaginary presence’ – is the space of otherness, the place or state in which transcendence may be activated. The spiritual experience and its processes permitting the subjective to be objectified, I found a model in the

detachment of the documentary prose of W.C. Sebald. The *objective* exemplified by the documentary, recalled the “*distant knowing*” in Burke’s account of the sublime and its emphasis on the *imminent*. The historical represented *objective* reason and provided the important detachment to create artworks that try to redeem otherness from loss.

The research influenced and positioned my own practice within the historical painting tradition. Its convention inspired two strategies: “to recreate a historic event as if it were a documentary and to expose the artifice of manufacture to transcend its illusion.” My strategies appear to contest imminence with transcendence, a paradox through which I endeavour to forge salvation with trauma, recovering its redemptive power through beauty.

Negotiating the paradox created uncertainty in regard to the morality of presenting subjects of trauma and real loss. I often wanted to flee from its darkness but deep within my own psyche a truth required a resolution and asked the question: “Can an artwork establish a transcendental encounter with a socio-political trauma and keep an aesthetic and moral integrity?” The inspiration was found in the spiritual teachings of my Shaykh who encouraged me, “to just be.” This statement advocated paradox as a spiritual reality. The inspirational story of moral certitude established in the life of a Buddhist monk, who meditated for peace on a flame lit from the burning embers of Hiroshima; and the western tradition of representing the Crucifixion, are further examples that activate feelings of redemption in order to transcend the subjective horrors of the event.

The re-enactment of a tragic event in Greek tragedy aims to invoke a catharsis in the participating public. The dramatised suffering summons a feeling of release or psychological purification, thus liberating the viewer to a perceived wisdom from a safe place of viewing. The paradox is reminiscent of Burke’s sublime *distant viewer*, but empathy redeems moral fortitude through self-awareness. The Aristotelian Tragedy is intended to detach the passions from the viewer to achieve a simulated conscious wisdom.

In my fourth year, the divergent aspects of the Doctorial research began to find resolution. The creative and theoretical practice began to inform each other and guide my conceptual commitment to the restoration of traumatic subjects (Munich). My

attempt was influenced by William Blake's cogent statement "*Whenever an individual rejects error and embraces truth, a Last Judgment passes upon that individual*" (Preston, 1944, p.77). I began to envision the place of my artwork: nonfigurative, detached, self-conscious phenomenological being, beautiful and transcendental. My own vision expressed in a contemporary statement of Bill Viola; '... a desire to create a space, an absolutely real, objective representation of the place where death is—to make a work not about death but a place beyond death' (Guggenheim Gallery, 2002). This desire found full expression in the installation constructed during the Art Toll residency. While referring to the German Sublime tradition, the installation mobilised the dialectic concerns within Burke's Sublime: awe and terror subverted by beauty. The installation provided the context for further discourse and future installations addressing the structural position of the paintings in relation to the sculptures.



Garry Doherty *The Clinic* Installation Art-toll Germany

The paintings held two positions; the extension of narrative and a painted proposal, a visualised proposition for potential sculptural installations. The work documented the staged engagement with the sublime in the hope that one illusion can illuminate another in a continual unveiling. Their contingency investigated the space between the logic of language and its persuasive ability to extend the limits of representation.

The fourth year research explored Kant and the Romantic Tradition with reference to the artist, Casper David Friedrich. His paintings examine the site of loss in both the subject and in the encounter of the viewer, capturing the sublime imagination. They

epitomise Kant's dictate that sublimity is not perceived in the object but in the comprehension of the viewer. In the Doctorate research I have attempted to make works of art that transform the temporal to a transcendent encounter. In doing so sometimes the investigation stated the transcendent intentions as absolutes, whereas the only absolute is the inability to control the viewer's freewill. I identified the need within my own investigation to permit the audience their own experience of the work. As the practice grew in confidence I was able to accept this simple truth, and recognise that difficulty in presenting a transcendent encounter within the limits of language is an element of my work.

At the beginning of section three I state my Shaykh's command, "*to just be,*" It has taken twenty years of spiritual teaching and the Doctorate to recognise and permit the simplicity of being. The research acknowledges the necessity to foster a spirituality that activates compassion, in order to redeem traumatic events in history. It recognises Islamic political events as subjects and attempts to employ beauty as a force for change in the continuum of the present cultural debate. As Adorno confirms: 'beauty: needs poverty to which it does violence: brutality pushed away to reveal beauty in difference' (Redmond, 2005). Beauty in difference describes the place of the work; the poetics of dissonance describes its the objective. Its aspiration, is to create transcendent works of art that make *being sublime*. I perceive the ambition both as a spiritual state and a political position that declares the status of the artist as an activist, galvanising the sublime as a force for change.

The Doctorate Programme has been directly responsible for reforming the orthodoxy of my creative practice and has transformed the perception of who I am and what I represent as a creative professional. Today I see myself as a professional activist, the context, being the gallery, the University environment or a spiritual community. The activism I speak of draws on all of one life's experiences and tries to employ them for change. The advocacy commenced with myself and took foundation in the Doctorate seminars where I discovered a critical community of creative researchers who provided a reflective space and an atmosphere of inclusion. This fostered a stimulating dialogue within the student body and over time I found my own intellectual reasoning deepened, resulting in a critical but intuitive approach. The

confidence this has engendered is responsible for a new professionalism, which has resulted in fifteen exhibitions, seven curatorial projects, and a number of publications.

The most significant transformation took place within my teaching practice. My Shaykh 's assessment was correct, "The Doctorial study will transform the assessment of yourself and change the perception of how you are perceived by your colleagues." My participation on the doctorate has transformed the perception of my colleagues, regarding my role within the University of East London This has opened up new opportunities in regard to teaching and my involvement as a key member of a University curatorial team. Although I am still employed as a part-time demonstrator I have slowly been able to transcend the limitations of the role within the University. Without the structure of the Doctorate I would not have been employed as a Lecturer and as a consequence my academic contribution has been increasingly acknowledged in the development of *Illustration, Exhibition Presentation and New horizons* modules.

The skills gained through the Doctoral experience have supported new initiatives within the Charity, (*The School of Sufi Teaching*) and its growing professionalism has concluded in the purchase of a property dedicated to disseminating true Islamic values to a British community. Skaykh Hamid Hasan, the present director of the Sufi Order continues to be supportive of my studies encouraging its dialogue with the business of the Order and acknowledges the emerging clarity it has brought to the needs of a fast growing institution.

The confidence that now resides in the Creative Practice has produced a determined objective to build a professional practice with an emphasis on exhibiting works in galleries and interventions in the city.

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APPENDICES

1. Interview *Sian Mooney and Garry Doherty: Art-Toll Residency: 29.13.2.*
 2. Annotated Diary *Art-Tol Residency : 13-28.3.12.*
 3. Proposal for Exhibitions.
 4. Working Summary.
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APPENDIX 1. *Art-Toll Residency Germany : Interview*



Garry Doherty and Cedric Christie in dialogue Art-Toll Residency



Carrying the fir tree into the studio.

RESIDANCY: Interview. Sian Mooney 29.3.12

SM. *How does the timeline of two weeks compare to previous deadlines for making works?*

GD. In the past, I normally make one piece a month. After the last presentation, I realized I needed to make two-piece a month for the next 17 months. At Art-Toll I made one large installation, tree paintings and a painting, which I discarded. The most significant discovery, was simplifying the practice to make one painting in a day. This I discovered on the last day.

SM. *You brought eleven canvases; did you plan to finish them all?*

GD. As soon as I got there I 'curated' the blank panels in the space to understand its dynamics. Afterwards it appeared as if I was going to fill them in one by one.

SM. *Do you think it was a bit formulaic?*

GD. I have a habit of creating a schematic for my critical thinking, and I was aware that the works I made there were possibly going to appear in my final presentation/exam.

SM. *Did you free yourself up, were you able to start thinking in the moment?*

GD. Not at the beginning. I brought some visual material with me and worked for 3 days and nights on it, but whilst painting it I didn't feel the excitement of being on a residency with other artist. Therefore I discarded that painting and proceeded to respond intuitively to the moment of the residency. This included accepting the invitation to a private view in Brussels. Hedley's support was significant, he encouraged me to go to Brussels with Cedric (Christie).

SM. *So what happened on the way to Brussels?*

The reason I went is; I am always interested in context, however I was continually anxious about not making work whilst on the trip. The real point was, I got to know Cedric well through that trip

SM. *In a discussion about you and your practice, Cedric had said to myself and Hedley that you give excellent feedback to others and what was needed was for you to 'meet yourself' in the studio and take heed of your accurate observations.*

GD. LOL! He said, you will only listen to me because I am a black man and I bet the only other person you listen to is your wife, a black woman!

SM. *What did you think of that?*

GD. Well I don't think it was very accurate. But I was particularly interested in Cedric and his skills and confidence. He has to sell stuff to survive and is totally able to approach anyone about his work and that's something I am interested in.

SM. *What provoked the epiphany?*

GD. I was meditating in the morning and felt inspired and anxious and called to action. I went for an early morning walk with Mark Sowden and was very aware of the canopy of trees discreetly veiling the buildings dedicated to the 'insane'. I also

recognized the veil was mirroring my own internal fears of craziness. Coincidentally, I had an image of an upside down tree in the studio that I brought from London. But I was calling on my interest in German Romanticism in particular, the use of the forest as a symbol reminiscent of Fredrich's work.

In those scenes they call to a silent moment which is full and that fullness metaphorically opens up a space of unknowing and therefore the images appear mysterious.



C.S.Friedrich Two men looking at the moon



The secure unit, Art-toll Germany

SM. *And is the mystery something you are trying to achieve.*

GD. In my work I am inclined toward the sublime tradition with the use of light to erode form and therefore create those unknown spaces that can become transcendent. But in the installation there was a direct observation of the view outside the window through the veil of trees to the psychiatric hospital across the street. I wanted to bring this view into the studio. When I was painting the last image of the installation I was using extremely thin paint and soft brushes and I sensed a feeling of tenderness and implied mystery in the work. When you came in (SM) you responded intuitively to the thinness of the image and said it was beautiful. I trusted your intuition.

SM. *I thought it was really expressive work.*

GD. I was interested in the physically expressive fact; the brushed surface transmitted a tenderness I identified as being truly me. I had been denying the emotive power of the brush stroke for many years and all of a sudden I was confronted by its intrinsic truth. I recognized a confirmation in your comments and I realized this was how I should be painting!

SM. *You said you have been telling yourself to paint like this for six years and you have finally listened to yourself!*

GD..... IAM BLACK AND PROUD!

The interview was conducted by Siam Mooney in London and published on the Directional Forces Blog.

APPENDIX 2. *Art-Toll Residency Germany: Diary*



RESIDENCY. *Annotated Diary. Art-Toll. 13-28.3.12*

Saturday13 Arrived at Art Toll-4pm. The studio is in a large institute that is reminiscent of English art and crafts architecture, but it is in the middle of a mental health complex. The atmosphere is very quiet and the large trees make the secure units look discreet.---Slightly worrying and disconcerting place to be. I help empty the van and choose a studio upstairs. I chose it for its crisp light and view out of the windows of the secure unit.

Sunday14 Ate breakfast with HR. and SM. A number of other PD. Students begin to arrive. I arrange the studio and curate and hang the unpainted panels. Curating the space allows me to understand its dynamics. I sand down 2 panels and begin drawing on it. The drawing is based on imagery of entertainment talk shows that I brought from London. I help cook and talk about the strange environment with other students.

Monday15 I get up at 5:30am to pray and meditate. Strange visions in the meditations leave me with tension in the head. I eat breakfast in the studio and continue drawing. I include a drawing of the security unit outside the studio window into the image of the talk show set. I have an idea that events could be presented on the set as if they were going to be judged---a mixture between "Jeremy Kyle" and "This is your Life". I watch a series of the show on the Internet. Dinner with all the students, I meet the sculptor Cedric Christy for the first time; he is vivacious, funny and insightful.

Tuesday16 Wake up at 6pm to prey and mediate, still feel tension in the head. Eat breakfast in studio arrange brushes and pallet and begin painting. I start in the left hand corner painting the background of the set/ I respond intuitively to the vision of trees veiling the scene outside the studio. I quickly paint branches across the painting in very thin blue paint indicative of Japanese blossom prints. I continue to paint in and around the branch drawing. I am not particularly happy with the work. I continue painting until 12pm.

Wednesday17Wake up at 6pm.Prey and meditate. Eat breakfast with students and go for a walk in the grounds taking notice of the trees. Start painting, but am frustrated, I cannot relate to the image while painting. I continue to work until dinner at 8pm. Share dinner with all the students and watch 1960's film of the art student "sit-in" at Hornsey. Cedric invites me to pv. in Brussels, HR. Encourages me to go as he realises I am interested in meeting other art professionals Continue painting until 1am. Go to bed anxious about leaving the studio for a day due to dissatisfaction with painting.

Thursday18 Wake up at 6am. Prey and meditate. Eat breakfast and write statement for publicity. Leave in the van with Cedric and talk about the art world and arrive at Brussels about 7.30. Cedric introduces me to the director of the museum. I am impressed with Cedric's ability to work his audience and potential clients, a mix of charm and intelligence. Go out to dinner with all the guests and stay overnight in bed and breakfast. Go to bed at 3am. Thinking Brussels is a good place for the arts because of the support of collectors.

Friday19 Wake up at 7pm. Prey and meditate. Have breakfast and left for contemporary art gallery to see Rosemary Trockel and to pick up road barrier for Cedric's sculpture. Return to Art Toll for dinner and discussion about artists that can't paint and cooks that can't cook. I put forward Leonardo, Michelangelo and Jamie Oliver. Seems reasonably accurate to me!



Saturday20 Wake up at 6am. pray and meditate. Go for a walk outside and find a tree damaged in the woods. Saw down tree and carry it into the studio. Fix it to ceiling, it measures about 6m high. I place a halogen light on the wall behind the tree pointing towards the viewer. I replace plastic membrane in front of tree ceiling off half of the studio and encapsulating the image. FEELING RELIEF I have succeeded in making the model. Go to bed at 1am after dinner talk to Cedric and Sally about the possibilities of Installation.

Sunday21 Wake up at 6am pray and meditate. Feel nervous and realise I need now to complete paintings of the installation. Have breakfast in studio, draw image onto circular panel of detail of installation- it is reminiscent of Japanese print and start painting. Plan to finish the work in one day—need greater spontaneity. Finish work at 10 pm, have dinner and go to bed at 1am....very tired.

Monday22 Wake up at 5.30, pray and meditate. Have breakfast with other artists and talk to chin about his work. Go to studio and begin drawing on a small rectangle panel. Begin painting interested in sensitive tonal nuances in colour. I try to create a dark but luminous space. Try to finish painting in one day but fail ...Get caught up in detail. I have dinner at 9.30 and rest until 12 afterwards continue to paint until 2am.

Tuesday23 Wake up at 6am. Pray and meditate. Feeling determined to complete a painting in one day. Start Painting a large panel at 8am. Try to keep the paint very thin giving a sense of ephemeral. Use very soft brushes to apply layers of film over drawing structure. Blend the image together with large brush at the end of the day. The image looks unfinished but captures the mood of the installation.. Decide to have the guts to leave,...thank God! Very happy!

Wednesday24 Pray meditated 7pm... wahay! Slow Breakfast and begin work finish at 10...very tired. Feeling of achievement...done my best!

Thursday25 Wake up at 6.30 and pray and meditate. Have breakfast and begin painting on panel which is highly finished and very smooth. Start painting with soft nylon brushes and a miniscule amount of paint. The thin film

Friday26 Wake up at 7am pray and meditate. Have breakfast and talk to Cedric about his work...Minimalism and black representation exemplified by black felt sculpture.

Meet the director of Art-toll who asks me to represent the UK in the Summer Residency, which is dedicated to the *Science of Nature*.

Saturday27 Wake up at 6am prey and mediate. Have a relaxed breakfast and wait for guests to arrive. I am surprised by the amount of interest from German viewers. Two curators take my details and discuss work in relation to nature and its construct. Go out to celebrate the end of the residency with other artists.

Sunday28 Wake up at 6am prey and meditate. Pack up studio in boxes and wrap tree in plastic, take it down stairs and leave it in garden. Pack the van and leave for the ferry....feeling exhausted but relieved and successful. Hire a cabin on ferry and sleep, arrive home at about 9.30pm. Greeted by Saada and the family.



Garry Doherty *The Clinic* Installation Art-Toll Residency 2012

APPENDIX 3. *Proposals for Professional Doctorate Exhibition*

PROPOSALS :

Car bomb

The Tower

Munich

Building Plan

Sculpture: *Car Bomb*

A Smart car will be sited next to a tree in the courtyard of the AVA building (see map) and Fluorescent lights will illuminate the smoke filled interior of the car. A video recording of the smoke filled interior reminiscent of a Sublime landscape will be presented on a TV monitor inside the AVA Building Gallery- near the entrance. A Framed Painting (60x40cm) will be hung on the wall adjacent the TV monitor with the Title of the work.

Materials: Smart Car- (183x 366cm), 5x Fluorescent Lights, Smoke Machine, Tape Recorder, TV Monitor, Framed Painting (60x40cm).

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...1...of...3....		
Name of Assessor:...david ring.... Assessor's Signature: Date:...9.4.13						
Description / Title of project:...prof doc.- car bombLocation:.....yellow square, outside ava building.....						
Technical Advisor:...craig madden/ fred brown...Subject Head Authoriser:...Karen ranney... date / period of project:15 th june 2013.						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Pre-project organisation	Misunderstanding of the events and activities that are planned	Personal safety	M	Pre-project briefings attended by all; information sent out to all concerned. Contact telephone numbers and names provided.	L	Project can be discussed by calling the organiser
On-site instruction before the start of activity.	Lack of knowledge and understanding of the area and the activity to be undertaken.	Personal safety. Personal injury.	M	On site main checks/inspection On site instruction and supervision. Communication - mobile phone to summon help if required. Site inspection and on site instruction and supervision. Removal of any hazards using thick gloves. Appropriate supervision levels.	L	...Garry Doherty. on...07988962598....
Incident management / emergency response	Lack of knowledge and understanding of dealing with and reporting response procedures	Inadequate handling and communication of incidents and near miss reporting leading to institutional issues	M	Incident management / reporting and emergency response plans discussed / agreed with technical advisor	L	Immediate communication of incidents to school office and safety coordinator followed by data reporting

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT	P...2...of...3....
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Installing electrical devices	Electric shock, fire, trip hazard from cables	Personal injury, site safety, building fire, injury to passers by	H	Only competent staff to fix power supply to installations. Students to work under supervision in installing electrical devices prior to activation by staff. Hazard tape to be used to demark safe working area	L	
Maintaining safe fire evacuation routes	Trip hazards and obstructions hindering escape	Inadequate escape during an emergency	H	Staff to ensure that minimum safe passages of 1.2m are in place throughout and that escape signage is clear and visible. Staff to intervene if overcrowding occurs. All required fire appliances to be in place and visible.	L	

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT	P...3...of...3....
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Installing sculpture / Fixing artwork to wall	Dropping artwork during fixing, artwork falling after installation. Hazardous materials in structure	Crush injury to installation crew. Crush injury to public during show Chemical reaction Sharp edges	M	Teams working to ensure distribution of load (never over 25kg per person) and safe raising of artwork.	L	Work to be inspected by staff after installation to ensure public safety
Making good following activity	Ensure all rubbish is removed and that walls and floors are returned to original state	Rubbish should be safely and appropriately disposed of with all suitable items recycled	L	Correct safety equipment and protective clothing provided	L	Staff to inspect area following event

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT	P.....of.....
Name of Assessor: _____ Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____	

Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?

Video Installation: *The Tower*

Shooting of the Video

The stairwell will be secured and alternative exits established and notified in advance of the site recording.

The stairwell of the AVA building will be filled with smoke (smoke machine) and illuminated with Fluorescent light. A video will be made recording a person's shadow ascending the stairwell.

Display of the Video

The video will be projected above the window in the stairwell. 4X Speakers will be situated on the *platform* at the top of the stairs.

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...1...of...3....		
Name of Assessor:...david ring.... Assessor's Signature: Date:...9.4.13						
Description / Title of project:...prof doc.- towerLocation:.....staircase next to building lift, ava building.....						
Technical Advisor:...craig madden/ fred brown...Subject Head Authoriser:...Karen ranney... date / period of project:15 th june 2013.						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Pre-project organisation	Misunderstanding of the events and activities that are planned	Personal safety	M	Pre-project briefings attended by all; information sent out to all concerned. Contact telephone numbers and names provided.	L	Project can be discussed by calling the organiser
On-site instruction before the start of activity.	Lack of knowledge and understanding of the area and the activity to be undertaken.	Personal safety. Personal injury.	M	On site main checks/inspection On site instruction and supervision. Communication - mobile phone to summon help if required. Site inspection and on site instruction and supervision. Removal of any hazards using thick gloves. Appropriate supervision levels.	L	...Garry Doherty. on...07988962598.... Stairwell to be closed to public for 1 day over a weekend to set up/install.
Incident management / emergency response	Lack of knowledge and understanding of dealing with and reporting response procedures	Inadequate handling and communication of incidents and near miss reporting leading to institutional issues	M	Incident management / reporting and emergency response plans discussed / agreed with technical advisor	L	Immediate communication of incidents to school office and safety coordinator followed

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...2...of...3....		
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date:_____						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Working at height	Falling or dropping tools or artwork	Personal injury and injury to passers by	H	All ladder work (below 1.8m) to be undertaken under strict supervision by staff. Students working for periods at height, to be inducted in and instructed to use scaffold towers and safety harness supplied by AVA. Working area to be coned and hazard tape used to demark safety zone Hard hats to be worn by those working below scaffold or ladders.	L	
Installing electrical devices	Electric shock, fire, trip hazard from cables	Personal injury, site safety, building fire, injury to passers by	H	Only competent staff to fix power supply to installations. Students to work under supervision in installing electrical devices prior to activation by staff. Hazard tape to be used to demark safe working area	L	
Maintaining safe fire evacuation routes	Trip hazards and obstructions hindering escape	Inadequate escape during an emergency	H	Staff to ensure that minimum safe passages of 1.2m are in place throughout and that escape signage is clear and visible. Staff to intervene if overcrowding occurs. All required fire appliances to be in	L	

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...3...of...3....		
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date:_____						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Installing sculpture / Fixing artwork to wall	Dropping artwork during fixing, artwork falling after installation. Hazardous materials in structure	Crush injury to installation crew. Crush injury to public during show Chemical reaction Sharp edges	M	Teams working to ensure distribution of load (never over 25kg per person) and safe raising of artwork.	L	Work to be inspected by staff after installation to ensure public safety
Constructing screening and fixing mobile walls together	Screens falling, structure unbalanced, maintaining escape routes	Crush injury to crew. Building safety during escape.	M	Plan to be established and agreed prior to commencement of works. Teams to be inducted and supervised in moving and fixing walls. Secure fixings to be used	L	Work to be inspected by staff after installation to ensure public safety
Making good following activity	Ensure all rubbish is removed and that walls and floors are returned to original state	Rubbish should be safely and appropriately disposed of with all suitable items recycled	L	Correct safety equipment and protective clothing provided	L	Staff to inspect area following event



Installation: *Munich Room 32*

Installation of video projection onto sculpture/screen accompanied by 15 paintings mounted on the walls.

A short throw video projector attached to a wooden platform is hung from the ceiling at 2.5m high and will project onto the back of a projection screen formed into a rectangular shaped container (4x2.5m) and suspended from the ceiling by metal rods. Inside the screen/container a dry ice machine will discharge a fog that will slowly leak from the container and into the exhibition space. A series of small paintings of various sizes will be mounted on the walls of the exhibition space. *Paintings: 15x 30x21cm, 5x 60x21cm, 1x 2.5x 1.6cm.*

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT
P...1...of...3....

Name of Assessor:...david ring.... **Assessor's Signature:** **Date:...**9.4.13

Description / Title of project:....prof doc.- munichLocation:.....photography studio studio 7 1.06A ava building.....
 Technical Advisor:...craig madden/ fred brown...Subject Head Authoriser:...Karen ranney... date / period of project:15th June 2013.

Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Pre-project organisation	Misunderstanding of the events and activities that are planned	Personal safety	M	Pre-project briefings attended by all; information sent out to all concerned. Contact telephone numbers and names provided.	L	Project can be discussed by calling the organiser
On-site instruction before the start of activity.	Lack of knowledge and understanding of the area and the activity to be undertaken.	Personal safety. Personal injury.	M	On site main checks/inspection On site instruction and supervision. Communication - mobile phone to summon help if required. Site inspection and on site instruction and supervision. Removal of any hazards using thick gloves. Appropriate supervision levels.	L	...Garry Doherty. on...07988962598....
Incident management / emergency response	Lack of knowledge and understanding of dealing with and reporting response procedures	Inadequate handling and communication of incidents and near miss reporting leading to institutional issues	M	Incident management / reporting and emergency response plans discussed / agreed with technical advisor	L	Immediate communication of incidents to school office and safety coordinator followed by data reporting

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...2...of...3....		
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Working at height	Falling or dropping tools or artwork	Personal injury and injury to passers by	H	All ladder work (below 1.8m) to be undertaken under strict supervision by staff. Students working for periods at height, to be inducted in and instructed to use scaffold ladders and safety harness supplied by AVA. Working area to be coned and hazard tape used to demark safety zone Hard hats to be worn by those working below scaffold or ladders.	L	
Installing electrical devices	Electric shock, fire, trip hazard from cables	Personal injury, site safety, building fire, injury to passers by	H	Only competent staff to fix power supply to installations. Students to work under supervision in installing electrical devices prior to activation by staff. Hazard tape to be used to demark safe working area	L	
Maintaining safe fire evacuation routes	Trip hazards and obstructions hindering escape	Inadequate escape during an emergency	H	Staff to ensure that minimum safe passages of 1.2m are in place throughout and that escape signage is clear and visible. Staff to intervene if overcrowding occurs. All required fire appliances to be in place and visible.	L	

AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT				P...3...of...3....		
Name of Assessor: david ring Assessor's Signature: _____ Date: _____						
Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?
Installing sculpture / Fixing artwork to wall	Dropping artwork during fixing, artwork falling after installation. Hazardous materials in structure	Crush injury to installation crew. Crush injury to public during show Chemical reaction Sharp edges	M	Teams working to ensure distribution of load (never over 25kg per person) and safe raising of artwork.	L	Work to be inspected by staff after installation to ensure public safety
Constructing screening and fixing mobile walls together	Screens falling, structure unbalanced, maintaining escape routes	Crush injury to crew. Building safety during escape.	M	Plan to be established and agreed prior to commencement of works. Teams to be inducted and supervised in moving and fixing walls. Secure fixings to be used	L	Work to be inspected by staff after installation to ensure public safety
Making good following activity	Ensure all rubbish is removed and that walls and floors are returned to original state	Rubbish should be safely and appropriately disposed of with all suitable items recycled	L	Correct safety equipment and protective clothing provided	L	Staff to inspect area following event

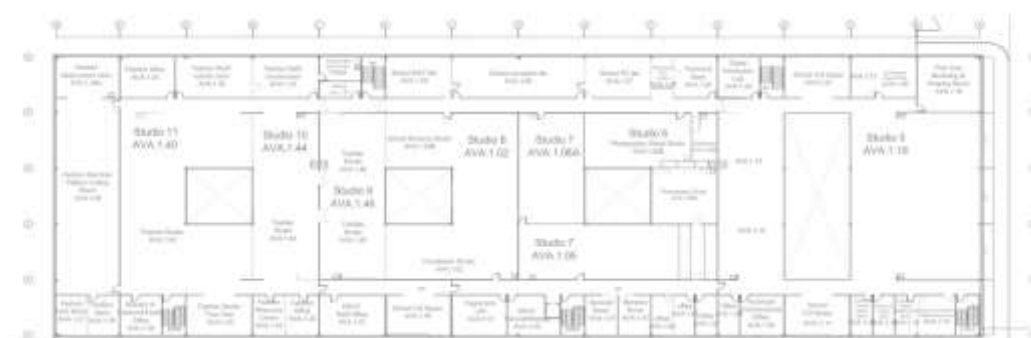
AVA Building - RISK ASSESSMENT	P.....of.....
Name of Assessor: ----- Assessor's Signature: ----- Date: -----	

Activity/ Process/ Operation	What are the Hazards to Health and Safety?	What Risks do they pose and to whom?	Risk Level H/M/L	What precautions have been taken to reduce the risk?	Risk Level Achieved H/M/L	What further action is needed to reduce the risk?

Ground Floor Plan: *AVA Building*



AVA Ground Floor



AVA First Floor

APPENDIX 4: Working Summary

“What ever spiritual light you have achieved through meditation practices will be transmitted in the artwork...so just be!”

Shaykh Hazrat Azad Rasool

The Doctorate research has been instrumental in reforming the conditions of practice, redirecting its commitment towards a critical engagement that compliments and empowers a spiritual life. It was through my Shaykh’s directive and encouragement that I registered onto the Professional Doctorate Programme.

I embarked on the Professional Doctorate programme determined to accomplish some key objectives: - To re-evaluate the creative impulse in an active project entitled ‘Future Perfect.’ To augment a comprehensive research culture, attain greater authority within the written documentation and realize a harmonious relationship between the spiritual and creative practice.

The Proposal recognized a need to realign *Future Perfect*, questioning the temporality of the paintings’ retro design. Their secular conditions obscured the core objective: *to develop an art that references the world, while creating the possibility for a sacred experience.*

The first year research cited the Rothko exhibition at Tate Modern as a significant influence; his paintings induced a profound meditative experience while viewing. This provoked the question, “how does an epiphany take place in and through a work of art?” The encounter with his paintings seemed synonymous with the metaphysical perceptions I had discovered in Sufism. My response identified contemplation as a defining characteristic and acknowledged a development towards a transcendent discourse. The Rothko experience was to act as a criterion for the subsequent years of study, its point of reference, a measure for the performance of a creative endeavour.

Throughout the period of study, the creative practice identified the ‘Sublime’ as a tradition it is intrinsically drawn towards. It subsequently located the critique in the

theories of Longinus, Burke, Chittick and Kant. The significance of the concept is further supported by a range of literary readings that include the Quran, Wordsworth to the documentary prose of W.S. Seabald and P. Schrader.

The writer Longinus first cites the tradition of the sublime in Greek literature. He states that the sublime implies that man can, in emotions and in language, transcend the limits of the human condition through the comprehension of the absent in the empirical world. The Sublime experience has the ability to configure the mundane and the ordinary, to a place that transcends language or description.

Burke's enquiry could be described as a work of experimental psychology, he equates the sublime as being; "the cause of the strongest emotion that an individual is capable of feeling (Burke, 1987, p.39). Therefore the Sublime maybe defined as pain, fear or terror. Burke traces the source of the sublime to 'whatever is in any way terrible...or operates in a manner analogous to terror' (Burke, 1987, p.39). In addition to his emphasise on terror, Burke examines the psychological experience of beauty and pain and develops a theory of aesthetic opposition, in which beauty is derived from pleasure and sublimity from pain. The paradox at the heart of his enquiry, which articulates my own perspective, forms the foundation of my own discourse throughout the doctoral texts

In the second year I was determined to critically advance the creative practice, a hypothetical question arose; "what does a transcendent object look like". The investigation initiated greater experimentation focusing on two areas; subject themes and their display.

In the studio I decided to experiment with formal modes of presentation. The decision opened up the practice and freed it from the authority of its own history. The realisation determined a group of works that established a multi-disciplined practice that mobilised the narrative over a range of exhibition platforms.

Its success brought greater transparency to the Socratic dialogue, consequently ensuring the confirmation of the second year's stated intention; "...the necessity to make an art work a self-conscious environment mindful of its own phenomenological

being, an object of consciousness that exposes its own internal dynamic system to itself thereby successively transcending its own appearance...”

The research was supported by literary readings, referencing the work of the documentary fiction writer W.S. Seabald and the film director Paul Schrader. Seabald's book *Austerlitz*, describes a fictitious account of history presented to the reader as a documentary report. A comparison is made with the artist Thomas Demand's photographic facsimiles of model replicas, representing historical sites of significance. His video *Tunnel*, inspired further research and the impetus to explore theoretical writings on spirituality in film. I discovered Schrader's book, *The Transcendental style in film*. The author attempts to define, 'what is' transcendent in film and give it a classification. In his thesis, he identifies "poverty of means," as a common attribute that results in stasis, a state nearest to a spiritual transcendental experience.

The identification with the above influenced and positioned my own practice within the historical painting tradition. Its convention inspired two strategies: *To recreate a historic event as if it were a documentary and to expose the artifice of manufacture to transcend its illusion.*

During the second and third year, an Islamic socio-political narrative materialised as a common theme. Paradoxically, it seemed to oppose the transcendent statement. For example, how could one effectively portray a transcendent artwork of the Munich Olympic assassinations? Political events of this order appear impossible to redeem or transcend. They have their authority in fact and any attempt at aestheticising seems morally inappropriate.

Conversely, the inspiration was found in the teachings of my spiritual teacher, who continually helped students to redeem their own past actions in order to transform their present being. Two examples further exemplified this narrative: The inspirational story of moral certitude established in the life of a Buddhist monk, who meditated for peace on a flame lit from the burning embers of Hiroshima; and the western tradition of representing the Crucifixion. Both examples activate feelings of redemption in order to transcend the subjective horrors of the event.

The third year text sought to identify an appropriate transcendent narrative. It addressed two main themes; the expression of moral narrative found in medieval painting and expressed in William Blake's Sublime vision within the Biblical apocalypse. Its cogent account states, "Whenever an individual rejects error and embraces truth, a Last Judgment passes upon that individual' (Preston, 1944, P.77) Second; The awe and beauty of a transcendent space evidenced in Viola's video installation *The Crossing*. It evokes the cycle of mythic archetypes of Birth, love, suffering, and death, the lexicon that constitutes the human condition. I argue the existential struggle activates transcendence in the place of embodied experience, as Viola states; ... a desire to create a space, an absolutely real, objective representation of the place where death is—to make a work not about death but a place beyond death' (Guggenheim gallery, 2002).

The theme of research continues into the fourth year text, consequentially locating the critical reading in Kant and the Romantic Tradition. It recognises two key concepts:

1. The perceived sublimity of the spectacle not in the object but in the comprehension of the beholder.
2. The difficulty in presenting a transcendent encounter within the limits of language.

The research references two artists, Friedrich and Neudecker. Both artists investigate the space between the logic of language and its persuasive ability to extend the limits of representation, thus addressing the mediated experience of the transcendent encounter. The report stressed the importance of discovering a subject for the creative practice that can unite both conditions.

During the subsequent years of study, I tried in vain to realise the transcendent intentions within the paradox of a socio political theme. At times the work appeared inconsistent due to a failure of confidence in the face of emotional complexity. The predicament came to an impasse during the fourth year. The recognition of traumatic themes featuring Muslim communities, mediated for western consumption, addressed

my present cultural perspective as a British Muslim. Their ordeal disturbed and unearthed an unconscious psychological driver, a consequence of a traumatic separation experienced as a child. The need to remedy a traumatic subject, mobilised past and present unconscious forces to discover an antidote for their distress.

The breakthrough came when my supervisor recognised '*meditation's intentionality*' as a systematic mannerism, one that dominated the practice and demanded an overriding structured discipline. He recommended I grant myself permission to be instinctive and allow the intuitive faculties more freedom. This characteristic found full expression in the installation constructed during the Art toll residency, which is the most successful work to date

In a tutorial, Geoff Brunel suggested I follow my Shaykh's advice, "to just be." The statement advocated an acceptance of the paradox as a spiritual reality, its contrary terms frame and reference the context for discourse; The sublimates dialectic which opposes immanence with transcendence, whereas I perceive them in union as one. My intention is to redeem trauma, and create a space for the viewer to meditate on history and rethink its presence in the continuum of the present cultural debate. The ambition is to create transcendent works of art that make the concrete sublime.

The Doctorate has been responsible for injecting a new professionalism into the practice. This has resulted in fifteen exhibitions, seven curatorial projects, and a number of publications. The most significant transformation is within the teaching practice. My participation on the doctorate has transformed the perception of my colleagues, regarding my role within the university. This has opened up new opportunities in consideration to teaching.

